THE

HISTORY,

&c. &c.

London: Printed by C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar.

THE

HISTORY

OF

MR. JOHN DECASTRO

AND HIS

BROTHER BAT,

COMMONLY CALLED

OLD CRAB.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

THE MERRY MATTER WRITTEN BY JOHN MATHERS;
THE GRAVE BY A SOLID GENTLEMAN.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. EGERTON, WHITEHALL.
1815.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF * * * * * *

MY LORD,

We have received your lordship's letter, together with the manuscript of our history, and beg to return you many thanks for the few alterations which your lordship has done us the honour to suggest: your being present at certain passages and transactions gave your lordship an advantage over us, and we take it very kind in you thus to have given us the benefit of it. Notwithstanding, however, your lordship's communications, there still remain

main some gaps in our history, which we hope, in some future edition of it, to have it in our power to fill up.

Your lordship has done us the honour to say in your letter, that you "not only give us your permission, but very much wish that the work be dedicated to you;" and that for this reason, viz. "You would be glad to give your countenance to every reprimand on great people who set the world an ill example." Your lordship must just permit us to say that this is very noble in you, and we have not gone so far as to name your name, lest you should feel yourself too much praised in public by this quotation from your letter: now in regard to praise we very well know that your lordship will be far better pleased with us if we tell you of your faults, and, to show how readily we would do any thing that were like to please you, we will name one in your lordship, you

ar-

are too much ashamed of doing a good thing, for when you happen to be detected in doing one you are sure to be put out of countenance.—You do ill, my lord, in taking so much pains to hide yourself: we may speak the more boldly since we name not your name —and, in order to it, we shall add, that it is a fault in your lordship to show the world so little of your example: you do not do your duty by yourself in thinking so meanly of yourself, nor by your neighbour in withholding any good thing from him. Your lordship says in your letter that "Nothing is more wanted than severe reproof and good example amongst great folks," and, that, "Old Crab should be brought to London and made to preach at St. James's."—you have it in your power, my lord, to do more good than any pulpit though planted all round with Old Crab's artillery, you mix very much with great folks when you come

to town, which no man can do by going to church in it.

We have the honour to subscribe ourselves,

My Lord,

Notwithstanding all your faults,

Nevertheless, your lordship's

Very humble servants,

JOHN MATHERS,

and

The SOLID GENTLEMAN.



HISTORY

CHAPTER I.

How Mr. Decastro had a great Fortune, but too little Money.

If Mr. Decastro's wants were his masters he made but a very bad servant. It hath been said to be no easy matter for one man to serve two, how could Mr. Decastro be expected then to serve two thousand? He did his best, however, for some time, but soon got out at heel and out at elbow. This comes of letting mad folks go loose in the world. Mr. Decastro, however, had now and then a lucid interval, and by the light of one of these said lucid intervals he saw one day this thing,

viz. that although he had a great fortune he had too little money. Now his brother Bartholomew, a man of a sour turn, and upon that account called OLD CRAB, was one of another kidney; he had a little fortune and too much: so they did their best to keep up that variety which makes this world so very pleasant. Now be it known, that Old Crab took his brother's rents and paid his bills for him as far as money went, and no further, and that for a very good reason. "Brother John," quoth Old Crab one day to him, in a loud voice, "thou'rt outrunning the constable." "Outrunning the devil! brother Bat," quoth he. "No," quoth Old Crab, "not the devil, but the constable: to outrun the devil will be no such easy matter: you will get his claws on your back one day, if you have not a care: you and your gang have been kicking up a fine dust here in London, this last year, with your balls, cards, and fiddles, and the devil

knows what—I can't pay your bills." "Can't pay my bills, brother Bat!" said Mr. Decastro, with a great stare. "No," quoth Old Crab, rising upon his toes, as his manner was, as if he would fly at a man, "I can't pay your bills, I say; art deaf, John?" "Better be deaf than hear bad news," quoth he. "How stands the account, brother Bat?" "Five thousand pounds upon the wrong side, brother John." Upon which Mr. Decastro doubled his fist, gave a great knock upon the table, and swore seven great oaths that came out of his mouth as if he had taken an emetic: we would set the oaths down if we were not afraid to raise the devil, and frighten the old ladies. "Don't you swear sometimes, brother John?" quoth Old Crab. "I never swore an oath in my life, brother Bat." "No!" quoth Old Crab, "what d'ye call G— d— my blood?" "An unguarded expression," quoth Mr. Decastro, and fell to swearing again worse

 than

than before. "Brother John," quoth Old Crab, coming in between the claps of thunder, "hard words pay no bills; it were well if you could swear yourself out of debt, but that is no such easy matter: a word with you by and by upon swearing: in the mean time, a word upon your worldly matters; you have an income of twenty thousand pounds a year, and cannot make both ends meet; the devil is in it if this be not enough to buy meat, drink, and cloth, for a man's family if he had a wife that bred like a rabbit:—you have only two children, brother John, and have got some gravel in your shoes already; you will get into jail, you blockhead." Mr. Decastro asked him, with an oath, if he got all the rents paid in the north, where his estates lay. "Never made a better gathering, John," quoth Old Crab; "there was a little behind last time, but all's paid up to a penny, and that's more than your tradesmen can say,

the

the worse luck for them, brother John." "You look at me as if I could help it, brother Bat; if there's no more money the rascals must wait." "But they will not wait," quoth Old Crab; "they say you're a young man, and it will do you good to stop you in time." "They're devilish kind when their own interest lies in the way to serve a man; they will arrest me?" "There are three of them that only wait to see me again, brother John, and if I come empty-handed they will put executions into your house, they bade me tell you so." "A civil message!" said Mr. Decastro. "A civil fool's head!" quoth Old Crab; "I tell you I have got no more money, what am I to do? drive the disease from one joint to another, borrow?" "What's five thousand pounds to a man of my property?" said Mr. Decastro; "it is but the prick of a pin, though it smarted a little at first; borrow the money, brother Bat, and pay the scoundrels directly."

directly." "I have done it," quoth Old Crab, "it was but to return it if you did not agree to it." "Why didn't you tell me so," said Mr. Decastro; "what is the good of making a man fret?" "Some bad liquors get better by fretting; I had a mind to try the experiment upon your constitution," quoth Old Crab. "Now, look you, brother John, I have promised to pay this money back again next year with five per cent. interest, so that will come upon the shoulders of the next year, it will add to the weight of the next year's expenses—this by way of memorandum, be frugal." Old Crab was a parson, so a little preaching came very well in character. "Brother John," said he, "you have got a sad trick of swearing, leave it off, it is vulgar and wicked." "It may be vulgar," said Mr. Decastro, "but it gives a man ease, and many other vulgar things do the like: but as to being wicked, nobody knows what that word means

means but you parsons." "Dost know the reason?" quoth Old Crab. "No," said Mr. Decastro, "what is it?" "Because, brother John, thou art an ass." "You parsons," said Mr. Decastro, "tell men they are wicked, as doctors tell men they are sick, and sell as much nauseous stuff for the soul as they do for the body, to answer the same end, videlicet, to pick people's pockets." "The more fool you, brother John," quoth Old Crab, "to call in both the physician and the parson when you lay sick of a fever: but more of this another time. I leave London to-morrow for the north, so give us thine hand, brother John: be careful;—and remember these words:" upon which Old Crab took a bit of chalk out of his pocket, and wrote the following short sentence upon a large mahogany door, in letters big enough for a man to creep through,

"BE FRUGAL,"

and, shaking hands with his brother John, left the room.

CHAPTER II.

How Mrs. Decastro called the Butler to get the Chalk wiped off the Door—some Account of Old Crab—how Mrs. Decastro loved him as the Devil loves holy Water—what happened when Old Crab came to Town the next Year.

As soon as Old Crab was gone out of the room Mrs. Decastro came into it, for she heard him go, and so might any who could hear a clap of thunder; for his loud voice, his thick boots, and his heavy oaken towel, made altogether a monstrous noise. "What is this?" said she, looking at the chalk on the door. Upon which Mr. Decastro explained matters. "What a vulgar beast it is," said she, which compliment was meant for Old Crab. "I wish, my dear, you would get something in the likeness of a human being to do your business for you, and turn this huge bear out of the house." Old Crab was

was a man of vast stature. "Can you find an honest man, my dear," said Mr. Decastro, "that will take all the trouble for nothing as brother Bat does?" "Well," said she, "I had rather pay and be cheated than be plagued with that great bear. Petticraft the attorney offered his services when we began house-keeping, take Mr. Petticraft and turn Old Crab out." "We had best not be more nice than wise," said Mr. Decastro, taking his wife by the chin, as his custom was. "Brother Bat is a little rough, but he has our interest at heart, and is an honest man; he lives amongst my tenants too, knows all the customs and rules of the estates, their value, their boundaries, the laws of all the manors, and of all landed property; is an excellent farmer and has an eye to the management of my lands; all my tenants respect and fear him, and dare as soon eat their fingers as use me or my property ill while he looks after it:

 —turn

—turn brother Bat out!—I shall turn myself out if I do. He takes all the trouble for nothing, will not take one penny for his pains; think of that, my dear." "I hate Old Crab as bad as the devil," said she; "he never comes into the house but he sets all our teeth on edge for a month! railing and scolding and calling to order, as if he was father of us all. Your father never could abide him, or he would not have disinherited him, and gave all to you, my dear." "It was a rash act in my father," said Mr. Decastro, "though we come in for the advantage of it; my father was hot, and Bat would speak his mind. No man could do more to be revenged on a son than disinherit him; but no man could feel it less than brother Bat. He is content to live upon a little, and even finds that little too much; he rents a good farm of me it is true, but, besides that, he has nothing but the small rectory of Oaken Grove which I gave him, and

he

he puts by a penny for his daughter every year, notwithstanding." "Aye," said Mrs. Decastro, "such a pinchback would live upon a flint and save money by skinning it at the year's end; that it is which sets him a snarling at us that live in the world like other folks. Mr. Perrings," said she, calling to the butler who was in the next room, "send a house-maid with some soap and water to wash this door, here is some filth or other upon it." The butler looked at the door and left the room with a smile. A few words more upon Old Crab. He was the eldest son of old Mr. Decastro by a former wife, and though he was, from the harshness of his manners and the hard favour of his visage, called Old Crab, he was not at this period more than five-and-forty. His humour was to abuse a man to his face and do him a good turn behind his back. He was disinherited by his father, as hath been said, upon a quarrel, and sent to be educa-

ted at Gottingen in Germany; in which university he became so great a scholar that many whose reputations lay that way could have found in their hearts to have cut his throat. But such was his cast of temper that he was as much feared as admired. He stood in awe of none, bold in speech, and laid about him if any gainsaid him, without respect of persons. All allowed that he was a great ornament to the university, but many secretly wished him hanged with all their souls. He got expelled from this place for a satire written in the Latin tongue upon some of the ruling men in the university. On his arrival in England he found his father and mother both dead. His father's fine feelings for the dignity of the family made him a good allowance abroad, out of which he had, in the course of a few years, saved enough to stock a farm which he took of his brother at Oaken Grove in Cumberland, where much of the family possessions

lay.

lay. He had written several books in the Latin and German languages, which, having been translated and published in England, had gained him much repute before he came back to his native country: one, a tract in divinity, took the attention of the bishop of ——, who gave him a hint by means of a friend, that if he would take orders he would get his brother to give him the living of Oaken Grove. His rude and savage manners offended most people who did not know him, and some who did; but he was a man that abounded in good qualities, and was of great service to many both in his own family and out of it. He brought home with him a Swiss lady, whom he had married, a very excellent woman, by whom he had ten children, one of which only, and that the youngest, lived, her name was Julia, who far excelled her very handsome mother in beauty, of whom we shall have something more to say. Bartholomew.

lomew Decastro, alias Old Crab, was a very strict and good divine, but preached rather satires than sermons, and would scold his congregation. In addition to his learning, which was admirable, he had great store of useful knowledge in all worldly matters, and certainly saved his brother John, and his brother-in-law the Earl of Budemere, from ruin. Old Crab would be as much out of humour with himself as with others, if not more so; he used to say, the man that pleaseth himself pleaseth a fool. No man held money in more contempt than he; it gathered about him, however, as if in spite of him, such was the economy, such the frugality of him and his excellent wife. Fortune put some temptations in his way, but Old Crab growled at her whenever she held out her favours. He was a good farmer, and made a great deal of money of the land which he rented of his brother John. His farm was as neat as a garden, and his house

house as clean as a penny; for what he was abroad his wife was at home, who was almost the only person whom he never quarrelled with. She was as sweet as sugar, he as sour as vinegar; and, odd as it may look, they were a very affectionate couple. One thing more:—on new-year's day Old Crab held what he called his Guinea Feast. Every farthing which he owed in the world was punctually paid before the 31st of December, and on the 1st of January he always invited his friends to dine with him, when there arose a little erection in the middle of the table with a small stage at the top of it made of glass, upon which a golden guinea was mounted in the sight of all, with a little label put round it, on which was written, in letters of gold,

"THIS GUINEA IS MY OWN!"

At Lady-day Old Crab always came to London to pay his brother's bills, manage his aunt Biddy's money matters, and a variety of other business.

A year had now passed since he had seen his brother John, and when he came to London he found him a thing a great deal more worth looking at than he was a year ago, for he looked a great deal more like a fool, and that's a thing which is not seen above once in an hundred years. When Old Crab came to London he always put up at the Old Hummums in Covent Garden, a place where a man may have what sleep he likes but no victuals. How came this when his brother had a house in town? Mr. Decastro's hours did not at all suit Old Crab. How came this when Old Crab's brother-in-law, the Earl of Budemere, had a house in town? Lord Budemere's hours did not suit Old Crab, neither was their company much to his liking. Now if Mr. Decastro had played the devil the year before, he had played the devil and his dam in the last, that is to say he and his wife together, who, instead of making the memorable sentence which

which Old Crab chalked up on the drawing-room door the rule of their conduct, and a better was not to be seen upon the door at Delphos, had squirted money away like kennel water. Old Crab soon found how matters had gone on, so he put his brother's money into the banker's hands, and, having done what he had to do, he left London and his brother John to settle their accounts as well as they could. Petticraft the lawyer was the first man to smell a rat, who ran to Mr. Decastro's house with an empty bag in his hand to fetch the five thousand pounds which had been borrowed of him, and five per cent. now growing thereupon. After Petticraft had got wind, for he had run himself out of breath, Mr. Decastro and he thus talked together, videlicet:

Mr. Decastro.—"What dy'e want, Mr. Petticraft?"

Petticraft.—"I want my money, sir."

Mr.

Mr. D.—" What's that to me? go to my brother."

Pet.—" Go to the devil! your brother will not pay any more bills."

Mr. D.—"Not pay any more bills!"

Pet.—" Not pay any more bills."

Mr. D.—" Who put that into your head?"

Pet.—" He did, he told me so himself:—and you too, I warrant."

Mr. D.—" I have not seen him."

Pet.—" Then you are not like to see him; he is gone out of town:—I am come to you for my money."

Mr. D.—" You have brought your pitcher to the wrong pump: I want money as bad as you."

Pet.—" I will have my money."

Mr. D.—" I must have it before I can pay it. My brother's gone out of town!"

Pet.—" Yes:—he bade me tell the tradespeople that they might come to you for their money if they wanted it—he would pay no more bills: so I thought

thought I had as good come for my money first and tell them the news afterwards: the news comes pleasantly from a man who has got nothing upon his mind. Your brother told me that he had left your money at the old place—give me a check upon your banker—there is one ready drawn, you need only put your name in the corner."

Mr. Decastro did so, and Petticraft left the house with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance; but he carried all the gladness out of the house and left none for Mr. Decastro, who fell into a fit of the dumps. If a man's wife cannot cheer him up, and make him merry, who can? In came Mrs. Decastro and asked her husband if he had got the belly-ache? "Curse the belly-ache," said he. "Aye," said she, "this comes of drinking such strong green tea for your breakfast." Upon which she rung the bell, and ordered Mrs Perrings to bring his master a

glass of brandy: the butler returned in a moment with a glass of brandy put upon a silver waiter worth a thousand guineas: who could not have taken a dose of physic off such a waiter and smacked his lips after it? As soon as the brandy came within the length of Mr. Decastro's leg he kicked the waiter and the brandy fifteen feet high and called Mr. Perrings a scoundrel. Now there was great ringing and knocking heard at Mr. Decastro's street door, bills came in like a storm against a wall, and Mr. Decastro drew upon his banker like a dragon: at last he drew a bill which the banker could not answer, and for this reason, viz. he had no more money: so the man who come last drew a blank, and he was not the only one. Mr. Decastro had not paid half what he owed before the cat was gone and her skin too, as folks say. It would have puzzled a wiser man than Mr. Decastro to pay a bill without money, so those whom he

could

could not pay in money he paid in promises; which is a sort of payment that is not in full of all demands. Now what Mr. Decastro had not in him people could not get out of him, so a great many of the civillest of his tradesmen, for the saucy ones came first, were forced to sit down gentlemen of the future tense, videlicet, those that *shall* or *will* be paid. Time ran on as fast as Mr. Decastro ran in debt, and brought round another year with all the incumbrances of the former two upon its back added to its own. At Lady-day Old Crab came as usual; paid his brother's rents into the banker's hands, and left town without seeing him; he had already seen more than was good of him. When a man gets well into the mud the exertion one uses to draw one leg up sinks the other still deeper than it was before; this was Mr. Decastro's case, for the first step he took when he got his money from the north was, to pay the civil

civil men who had been so polite as to take promises instead of cash the last year; now when these were all paid there was nothing left for the saucy ones, who came about Mr. Decastro's head and ears like a nest of hornets. Old Crab had an eye upon his brother, and knew how he was going on. "Nothing will cure this crack-brain'd coxcomb but a good smarting," quoth he; "John is not in parliament this time, for the electors did not get drunk and of course did not chuse him, so the next visit I pay him may be in jail. Petticraft the lawyer told Old Crab how matters went on from time to time.

CHAPTER III.

How Old Crab changed his mind—his talk with his Brother John—how Mrs. Decastro beat the breath out of her Husband's body.

ANOTHER Lady-day came and brought Old Crab to London as of old:—"How stand matters with brother John?" quoth he to Petticraft. "He has left off playing the devil," quoth Petticraft, "to play a worse game." "I am glad to hear that the blockhead is mending his hand," quoth Old Crab. "Go once more to the house and see what can be done for him," said Petticraft: "I have borrowed money for him or he had been put into jail." "So you said last year," quoth Old Crab; "hast borrowed any more since that time?" "I have," said Petticraft, "and more the last time than

than ever I did before." "How much," said Old Crab. "Ten thousand pounds," said Petticraft. "Very good," quoth Old Crab, "this makes fifty thousand pounds?" "It does," said he. "Well," said Old Crab, "I will go and call on the blockhead once more, and try if I can get him into my plans." Upon which Old Crab went to his brother's house, and raising his oaken towel gave the door three bangs that shook the garrets. Mrs. Decastro, and her sister-in-law, Lady Budemere, who were sitting at their breakfast, said the Park and Tower guns were firing, and Mrs. Decastro rang the bell to ask what news were come. A footman, for Mr. Decastro kept a world of servants, who ran up stairs to answer the bell, opened the door and let Old Crab into the room. Mrs. Decastro and Lady Budemere started out of their chairs at his appearance, and looked like two peo-

ple

ple that were very much terrified. "Sit still and eat your victuals," quoth Old Crab; "where's brother John? I would speak a word with him if you can find him." "He is getting up," said Mrs. Decastro, "we expect him to come to breakfast presently." "Getting up!" quoth Old Crab; "why, 'tis almost two o'clock; does the fellow lie in bed all day?" Mr. Decastro now came in, and whether the ladies had finished their breakfast, or not, we could never get any good intelligence; we think it most prudent, therefore, to say nothing about the matter; they made the best of their way out of the room, however, and left Mr. Decastro and Old Crab at one another's mercy. When a man comes into a room and finds a thing in it which he never expected to see, he falls into great astonishment. "Brother John," quoth Old Crab, without giving him time to recover his senses, "you are going, I find, upon a full

gallop to the devil; I am come here to stop you one moment upon the road, just to ask you one question before you take the last plunge: have you or have you not a mind to be saved from perdition?" "I have," said Mr. Decastro, letting his lower jaw fall and looking as white as a sheet. "Then," said Old Crab, "you must get out of London." "Get out of London!" said he, "where would you have me go?" "Why, not into that fool's paradise, Gimcrack Hall, in Berkshire; come into the north and live amongst your tenants, where a landlord ought to be, in the old family castle at Oaken Grove: I have taken care to keep the place from falling to pieces, a little money would make it comfortable, and as for the furniture it is none the worse." "I shall not be able to live in such a great place," said he, "I am afraid to tell you my reasons." "It is very like," quoth Old Crab; "but out of this place you

shall

shall come, and out of your profligate gang here, that will eat you out of house and home and laugh at you when they have done, if the devil come out of hell to pull against me; I am come to a mind not to stand by and see you ruined: so I told your lawyer I would change my mind, and come once more to see if any thing can be done for you." "O brother Bat!" said Mr. Decastro, covering his eyes with his hand, "you are come too late, I am ruined already! I don't know what it is that I owe, and am afraid to ask!—But I cannot come into the north." "You shall come into the north," thundered Old Crab, "if I carry you there upon a pitchfork! The old family castle shall not be forsaken; say me nay, and I will break your bones to save your soul and body from everlasting damnation: come into the library, we shall have the women here presently, I would have a little talk with you." Upon which

Old Crab seized his brother by the arm, as a kite would a lark by the wing, and off he carried him, with as much ease, into the library; when, having shut the door, he read him a lecture that lasted two hours, the subject of which was profligacy, atheism, and bad company. Few men like to be told of their faults: Mr. Decastro, however, was prepared for his lecture, for he had sometime found that his life was wrong, which was proved by an argument that few could contradict, the ill effects of it. Old Crab scolded furiously at the vices of the age, and went so far as to call a great many of Mr. Decastro's friends the devil's imps. He objected to his brother, his balls, masquerades, concerts, conversations, and card parties on Sunday nights, and told him that full houses made empty pockets: to prove the truth of which Mr. Decastro had nothing more to do than just to put his hands into his own. In regard to his affairs, Old

Crab

Crab told him that he knew enough to say that his house in town and his country-seat in Berkshire must be sold, but how much of the property in the noith must be saciificed he could not tell. "Ah biother Bat!" said Mr. Decastro, with a rueful countenance, "when you come to know how many fathom deep I am in debt you will find, when all is paid, we may run naked into the woods and live upon pig nuts. Live amongst my tenants! when all my bills are paid I may live amongst other people's if I can get any bread to eat; but you will have no easy matter to bring me to live amongst my own." "Brother John," quoth Old Crab, "we cannot tell how bad matters may be till we come to probe your wounds; your estates will be sadly mangled I doubt; but I have one thing to tell you, out of London you must go or your body will be laid by the heels in it." "O I am a ruined man!" said Mr. Decastro; and clapping his hands

 one

one on each side of his head, with his elbows raised in a straight line from his shoulders, and his eyes to the ceiling, he had a mind to make his way out of the room through a door of solid oak which his wife opened just in time to prevent his dashing his head against it, not a little astonished at meeting her husband in the odd attitude aforesaid: she stept aside or he would have run her down, and forth he marched like one frantic. "What's the matter now?" said Mrs. Decastro, staring at Old Crab; "I wish you would get you gone into the north, you never come here but you disturb my family." "When the house is on fire 'tis high time to disturb the family," quoth he. "House on fire!" said she, "what do you mean by that?" "Mean! why, you and your husband have made the house too hot to hold you—so you must turn out, madam," quoth Old Crab. "Turn out!" said she. "Turn out," quoth he in a thundering voice.

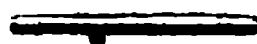
One

One cannot see in the dark certainly, but when one gets too much light it is just as bad the other way; so one cannot hear any thing when there is no noise, and when there is a great deal one is struck deaf, which was Mrs. Decastro's case at this moment, for Old Crab spoke loud enough to be heard from London to St. Alban's. Mrs. Decastro was struck dumb too as well as deaf, for she said nothing. She had a magnificent house in town, and the words "turn out" gave her a fit of the colic. Eve cried when she was turned out of Paradise for none of her best qualities; but if she had been turned out of such a fine house as Mrs. Decastro enjoyed in Grosvenor-square she would have gone mad. Old Crab went on to give some reasons why she must turn out, but spoke too loud to be heard. The human faculties have an odd way of accommodating themselves to emergencies, which, after a little, was the case with Mrs.

Decastro's ears; Old Crab told her that she and her husband had run to the end of their string:—that their vices began to knock at their doors:—that pay-day was come;—and that what Mr. Decastro could not pay in money he must pay in land and houses. He told her that they had kept more company than the house would hold, for there was no longer any room for the master and mistress in it; and ended as he began that she must turn out. These words were spoken by Old Crab in a voice as loud as thunder; it was quite impossible for Mrs. Decastro, and to give her her due she made several attempts, to interrupt him; her voice might as well be heard at the falls of Niagara: but as soon as there was a pause, she jumped up from off a sofa on which she had flung her body in a passion, and told Old Crab that he had come into the house on purpose to turn it out o' window, that all he had said was false, and ended her speech

with

with calling him a great bear! At that word she bounced out of the room; and, making a furious exit, casting an eye of vengeance on Old Crab, ran full upon her husband's stomach, who came into the room at that moment, and beat the breath out of his body.



CHAPTER IV.

How Mr. Decastro called in his Debts—Mr. and Mrs. Decastro's Skill in Arithmetic—Mr. Decastro runs away in the middle of the Night.

WE left Mr. Decastro at the end of the last chapter without any breath in his body, being violently struck by Mrs. Decastro's person without being much in love with her—he got a terrible knock—what a sad thing it is sometimes for a man and wife to come together! "What d'ye think of that, brother?" quoth Mr. Decastro, sucking up his breath. "Think!" quoth Old Crab, with a grin of indignation, "why, I think there are so many fools in the house that one can't open a door without tumbling over another. What brings you back?" "I am come to ask what had best be done?" said he. "Done!" quoth Old Crab. "Why,

"Why, you must call your debts in, and when you have found what you owe, you must look what you have got to pay them with." Mr. Decastro was a very good sort of a gentleman in the main, but he had this one fault among others, viz. he was very obstinate, not in the right, for that would not have been so bad, but in the wrong and that was not so well. Old Crab, seeing what a fine trade his brother was driving, had advised with him from time to time to leave London and come into the North; but all he could do or say was equally in vain, he had as good pull against a mountain that were rolling down a precipice. Give a wild horse his head and he will sometimes stand still of his own accord. Old Crab tried this plan with his brother, but with this difference—he threw something in his way to frighten him, which was his ruin in this world and another. This world, however, was the most to

Mr. Decastro's purpose at present, the other seemed to be too far off to have many terrors, so Old Crab spurred his creditors on who came about him in a full gallop like a troop of horse, and charged him with their bills in a very gallant manner; having done which Old Crab left London, and orders with Petticraft to tell him how matters went on. Mr. Decastro took his brother's advice for once and made a great calling for accounts. Now a bill is a thing that will come without a man's calling his heart out after it: Mr. Decastro, however, made a most monstrous calling all on a sudden, and his creditors began to think that he had found a great pot of money somewhere, and every body would be paid twenty shillings in the pound down upon the nail. This acted like a paregoric for a little time, but only served to make them more restless afterwards. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro were seated in the library,

brary, and every farthing which they owed on earth lay in mountains of paper upon the table before them. "Now, my dear," said he to his wife, "I would give a penny to know what it is that I owe in all."—

There had been a little blunder made in Mr. Decastro's education, for it chanced that amongst all other useful things he had not been taught arithmetic. To do justice to his parents, however, a writing-master was sent for, and he was put to accounts. Hearing him cry, his mother came in one day, and asked what was the matter? "Master don't like figures, madam," said the schoolmaster. "You have not been whipping my child, I hope, sir?" said his mother. "No, madam," said he. "Nasty figures," said she; so the writing-master was sent out of the house, and his mother filled the boy's mouth with sugar-candy. "My dear," said Mr. Decastro to his wife, "I would give a penny to know what it

it is that I owe in all: suppose we go to work, and see if we can make it out between us;" and to work they went one morning, and soon got into such a puzzle that they scarce knew their right hand from their left! Having heard that wonderful things come from great exertions, they went to work again after dinner, and kept on summing until five o'clock the next day, when they came to a grand total which frightened them both out of their wits; for they had made it out that Mr. Decastro owed more money than would pay off the national debt. Mrs. Decastro wrung her hands; Mr. Decastro gave himself a dismal blow on the forehead, and they went to bed very well satisfied in one thing, viz. that they were ruined. The morrow happened to be Sunday; a day in which all tradesmen's shops, and books, and mouths are shut as far as business and money matters go, which made it a day of rest to Mr. and Mrs. Decastro, who

thought

thought they might as well sleep in their beds as at church, so they staid at home and slept soundly without the help of a sermon. This made Mr. Decastro fresh for the affairs of the next night, when he put some things into a portmanteau in the middle watch, took a servant and a couple of horses, and rode out of the gayest city in the world as if it had been all on fire, leaving a note to inform Mrs. Decastro that he was gone on business into the north.

CHAPTER V.

How Mr. Decastro was converted to Christianity—how Mrs. Decastro sat upon thorns in London—a Description of Oaken Grove.

Mr. Decastro had been twice at church in his life—when he was christened, and when he was married, which was once more than most of his acquaintance. As for religion he never thought about it, and none of his friends ever put it into his head, or took it into their own, except Old Crab—but more of this presently. We must now attend Mr. Decastro upon his journey, on which, whatever leather he might lose, he lost no time. He had an excellent horse, and his groom as good, and they galloped away like smoke before the wind. After a great deal of galloping they galloped at last into Old Crab's farm-yard. "Brother John,"

John," quoth he, putting his head out of window, "what the devil brought you here?" "Look ye, brother Bat," said he, "if ever I go to London again I will gallop through hell to it!—I have been ruined in it: I have called in all my bills and cast up all, and if my estates were ten times as many and fifty times the worth, and all sold at the best hand, they would not pay half of what I owe!—Hide me, brother Bat, hide me from the world! for I am a beggar." At which words the poor gentleman wept. Old Crab knew his brother to be in some very great mistake, but was willing to make the best of it, and said, "Look you, brother John, this comes of not taking my advice in time: if those words which I chalked up upon your door, some years ago, had been made the rule of your conduct, you had no cause to sit by my fire-side with your stupid head between your knees sniv'ling like a blockhead."

blockhead." "Do not abuse a man in distress, brother Bat," said he, sobbing. "O that you had never been disinherited! O that I had never come to the estates! I might have lived frugally, like you, upon a little, and never come to want and beggary!"—"Hold up your head, you fool, and answer me some questions: you have called in your debts you say, and cast up all that you owe; what is the total?" When Mr. Decastro named the sum Old Crab fell a laughing. Mr. Decastro said it was inhuman to laugh at his miseries however he might deserve them all. "You blockhead," quoth Old Crab, "you are only fit to be laughed at; you have called in your debts you say, and cast all up; have you taken any steps towards the payment of them?" "None," said he; "for seeing the impossibility of my ever being able to pay one half of them, I ran away from my creditors in the night.

O brother Bat, tell me what it is that you are worth, for I, my wife, and my two babes must depend on you for our bread! Your farm must be sold—the creditors will have all." "If my farm is to be sold I will buy it," quoth Old Crab, "and if your creditors come here I will break their bones." "You buy it!" said Mr. Decastro, "how can you buy it?" "That's neither here nor there," quoth Old Crab; "I have put a penny by, but that's neither here nor there.—I'll break their bones, I tell you, if they come here, a pack of tawdry scoundrels that are ruining their own families to live like such profligate dogs as yourself! Come, John, hold up your head and dry your tears; if you will promise to follow my advice; I may do something for you which you little expect: have you brought your papers with you?" "I have," said he, staring eagerly at Old Crab, as a drowning man at one who holds out a hand to

save

save him. "Well, we will look into them after dinner," which was now put upon the table, "and see how matters will be," said Old Crab.—"Come, John, draw your chair, here's a round of beef of my own feeding, you are heartily welcome—let us have no more sniv'ling." Mrs. B. Decastro now came in, and her daughter Julia, about ten years of age, one of the most beautiful little girls that ever was seen. Old Crab's wife and daughter were new to Mr. Decastro, for this was the first visit that he had ever paid his brother in the north. He had not felt himself so much at his ease for some time, and, notwithstanding the sore places in his mind, he fell to the boiled beef, carrots, cabbage, and potatoes, and ate like a man that had come off a long journey. The neatness and comfort of Old Crab's house, and his calm and cheerful fire-side, where the crackling of the billets made all the disturbance, very much soothed

Mr. Decastro's troubled spirit, and he felt like a sailor who had got into a snug harbour after the driving and tossing of some dreadful storm. He was much pleased with the soft engaging manners of Mrs. Decastro, and little Julia did every thing she could to make her uncle welcome. As soon as the maid-servant had taken the dinner away, which consisted of a noble round of beef, vegetables, and a hot apple pie, "Come. brother John," quoth Old Crab, "I have no Burgundy or claret for you, but can bring you a bottle of as good old port as any in England, and what will give it a better relish," added he, drawing the cork, "it is paid for." That touched poor Mr. Decastro in one of his sorest places; he took a glass of wine, however, by way of a cordial, and said he had never tasted a better in any of the best taverns in London. "Now, brother John," quoth Old Crab, "we will come to business, I never

keep

keep any secrets from my wife, so you may speak your mind before Rachel." Little Julia, who had begun to look to the dairy, now made her curtsey and retired to her occupation. Mrs. B. Decastro, a woman of tender feelings, often shed tears while Old Crab and his brother were talking their matters over. The papers were now opened, and Old Crab soon made an entry of all Mr. Decastro's debts in a fair copy-book, but did not at that time point out the blunders in his brother's calculations, willing to make the best of his terrors, and turn them to his advantage. The time of the year was now at hand for Old Crab's journey to London, and he began to prepare matters accordingly: and we think Old Crab placed no little confidence in his wife's virtue to leave a man of good person and of such loose principles as Mr. Decastro in his house during his absence, which was like to be of longer duration that time than it had ever been

been before upon account of his brother's affairs. Now to have seduced his brother's wife at the very moment he was engaged in his service, and that of so much importance too, were just the very sort of gratitude which a man of the world was in duty bound to shew his friend: and what is the use of friendship if all things are not common among friends? Mr. Decastro, however, was never more remiss in any matter; one reason might be, and a very extraordinary one it was, Reader, that before Old Crab sat out for the south a very remarkable event took place, which was none other than the conversion of Mr. Decastro to christianity, for he had much talk with his brother on religious matters, which ended in bringing him over to the christian faith; and indeed Mr. Decastro had hitherto been little better than an atheist; now having so many good things about him he certainly had as much to be thankful for as any

man,

man, and that makes for the wonder of the matter that the richest men should be, for the most part, the least religious. That a man who hath the most good things in this world, should be the least thankful, looks a little odd; but Mr. Decastro never said "thank ye" for any thing that heaven had been so good as to give him: he had been christened it is true, and godfathers and godmothers had promised and vowed very good things in his name, but it had been to very little purpose; he was as much an heathen as the dog-ribbed Indian. Old Crab had touched him upon religious matters before now, but could never get him in a mind to lend an ear to grave stuff, as he used to call religion with a sneer, which none made any account of but such as filled their pockets and their bellies by it, and was fain to leave him after a few bitter invectives. Some men are made good upon the spur of evil, or, at least, are often

often predisposed by it to become so; and Old Crab did not let slip so favourable an opportunity to round his brother a little in the ear upon this subject at the present moment. Mr. Decastro amongst other unfortunate qualities, had a very high conceit of his own abilities, which led him to conclude that if he met with an argument which he could not answer, nobody else could do it. Old Crab made his advantage of this matter, and so ill a thing as self-conceit was seldom brought to so good a use. Old Crab opened a plan of works against his brother's infidelity, and brought his artillery to bear upon his profligate and vicious life, and beat down every defence of his conduct by charging his brother home with the ill effects of it, who soon found himself too much within shot to stand his ground for a moment upon this subject. In regard to religious matters, Mr. Decastro began to argue with his brother at first, but soon ran aground,

and no wonder, where more able men than himself had come to a stand before him. He stared at Old Crab like one in amazement, and began to think him a very extraordinary person who could bring so many arguments into the field which he could no more conquer than overthrow mountains. It may look a little odd that Mr. Decastro should owe his conversion to christianity so much to his self-conceit: but he took it for granted that every argument must needs be true which he could not prove to be false. Old Crab followed him up and brought him at last to listen to his instructions with all the silent attention of a child. "Upon my soul," said Mr. Decastro, "I had no idea that these parsons had so much to say for themselves;" and began to think, and wisely enough, that it would be no disparagement to his abilities to be convinced by the same arguments, and believe in the same things which a Newton, an Addison, and a Locke

had

had been convinced by, and believed in, before him. Old Crab now put some good books into his brother's hands, which gave great furtherance to his arguments, and left him to meditate upon, and to digest, what had been said He then set off for London, armed at all points, to meet Mr. Decastro's creditors.

The talking about London puts us in mind that we have left a distressed lady in that gay city, to whose relief Old Crab was coming, like a knight errant, with all speed. Now a lady in distress is usually pitied by most men and some women; a good deal, however, depends upon the sort of distress, and the manner in which it comes: it came to pass in Mrs. Decastro's case, that she not only got no pity from many, but some were heartily glad to hear that her husband was run away from his creditors and was ruined; and so kind were many that they not only did not wish that her troubles

were less, but, on the other hand, wished they were ten times as many: this was a little ill-natured, it was nevertheless very true for all that. To explain this, the splendour of Mr. Decastro's fortune, the magnificence of his establishment, and the grandeur of his entertainments, raised him high enough in the world of all conscience if he could have been content without bringing pride to top the building; that thing gave folks much offence; add to which a saucy triumph over others, who, in an attempt to rival his extravagance, either ruined or lamed their fortunes, or gave up a contest with much bitterness of heart to which they found themselves unequal. Thus the ground was forelaid for great rejoicings when Mr. Decastro's foot should slip, and many rejoiced with exceeding great joy accordingly.—Mrs. Decastro, as soon as it came to be known that her husband was run away, did not care how little people looked

looked at her, and though she shut herself up in her house was never at home in it. Sundry reports came abroad concerning Mr. Decastro; some said he had not only made his escape out of London, but out of the world, that he had put a pistol to his head and blown his brains out; others, that he had fought a duel with one of his creditors who had blown his brains out for him and saved him that trouble; others, that he had run away from his wits as well as his creditors, and was clapt up in a dark room and a strait waistcoat. There were other reports, and no wonder, when so many tongues were in motion, but these shall content us at present. In regard to her person, Mrs. Decastro was so far safe from all assaults of the law, which comes down, like other things, with all its vengeance upon the poor husband's head, and never meddles with the wife; and though man and wife are one flesh, yet when the husband's flesh is put into

jail the wife's flesh is left out for some reason, though the fault may be more in her flesh than his. When Old Crab came into the house, he found matters in it at sixes and sevens; servants grumbling for want of their wages, butchers refusing meat, bakers bread, coal-merchants coals, and all roaring for money like mad; and when it was known that Old Crab was come again into his brother's matters, it was expected that he would be pulled in pieces, and he certainly would if he had been a bank-note. But he did not come with "I promise to pay" written upon his person. Old Crab was a man who never made any such rash promises in these cases; he had not been in the house an hour, however, before he had twenty men upon him, with bills in their hands. He lifted his oaken towel, drove them before him like dust, and told them there might be five shillings in the pound for the rascals for any thing he knew, but would not give his

word for that. The sight of the old paymaster, however, gave the creditors great hopes. The first thing Old Crab did when he came to town was to sell his brother's house in Grosvenor-square, which he did for ready money, to one Lord Delamere, of whom Mr. Decastro bought it. The house had been pawned to Mr. Decastro for a play-debt in which his wife was concerned, when Lord Delamere, getting into troubled waters, Mr. Decastro paid his lordship the difference, at that time much in want of money, and took the house—and this to be revenged upon his lordship upon a quarrel, for he instantly turned him and his family into the street. This was not much to Mr. Decastro's credit, but as all know it, 'tis in vain to say more or less about the matter; things turn about in this world and come strangely home to a man's own door: a rich uncle died and left Lord Delamere a good fortune. Money was now at ebb with Mr. De-

castro and at flow with his lordship, who had now an abundance, so he was glad of an opportunity to regain his old family house, and be revenged in his turn upon Mr. Decastro's family. Old Crab knew all this, and did not fish the waters in vain for Lord Delamere, who gave him his price at a word, and the means, if need might be, of getting Mrs. Decastro speedily out of London; for it was his intention to take her and the children back with him into the north: so the house was sold over Mrs. Decastro's head, and she none the wiser, and that to the bitterest enemy she had in the world. When Old Crab came to the door, he gave it three or four hard bangs with his great oaken towel as usual, and asked for Mrs. Decastro, when the man who answered the knocker said his mistress was not at home. "You lie, you scoundrel!" quoth Old Crab; "tell her I am come, or I will break your bones." Upon which the footman

man, seeing the oaken towel raised over his head, dashed away, and Old Crab walked up stairs after him, and found Mrs. Decastro sitting with the children and in tears. He bade her prepare to go back with him into the north, but she refused to leave the house. Women are apt to be obstinate sometimes, but it is very foolish, and if men are so too, they are none the wiser for that. "What am I to do in the north?" said she. "It is no matter," quoth Old Crab, "you will know when you come." "Her husband might run where he liked," she said, "but none should turn her out of that house, for her money bought it, and her's it was." This was true, for her fortune was sold out of the funds to pay Lord Delamere the balance, but her money lay under no tie. "We will talk a little about that when I come out of Berkshire," said he. "What are you going to do in Berkshire?" said she. "I am going to sell the estate there," said he, "to

help to pay your debts." "Is there enough to pay them," said she, "when all is sold?" "You will be wiser when you know," quoth Old Crab; "but I came to tell you that I shall take you and the children back with me into the north, when I come out of Berkshire; so pack up your tatters and be ready." While Old Crab was in Berkshire it came to Mrs. Decastro's ears, where bad news would come sometimes, that her house was sold, and that Lord Delamere had bought it. This intelligence turned Mrs. Decastro into stone: and it would have been well if this petrefaction had held her, for then she would have felt nothing, for a stone, some say, has no feeling: but flesh and blood unluckily came again and brought back those nice feelings which are a sad trouble to some folks. She was now in great terror, and sent letters, and, at last, one by express, after Old Crab into Berkshire; she expected every hour to be turned out goods and

chattels

chattels and all into the street. Poor lady, she sat upon thorns, and there we must leave her, not having any easier cushion at present to put underneath her. Women find the use of men sometimes, though they can scarcely ever give them a good word; and it is fit they should for being so saucy. Old Crab and Mrs. Decastro had never been the best of friends; for Mrs. Decastro was a very fine lady and a very extravagant one too, and that was a sort of thing which Old Crab was never much in love with. He cast up her milliners, mantua-makers, perfumers, lacemen, embroiderers, furriers, silkmen, artificial-florists, [illegible], confectioners, dentists, goldsmiths, silversmiths, jewellers, and other the like bills, with many grins of indignation, and told her she would come to ruin and a jail, if she could shower down gold out of her petticoats as often as she had a mind to shake herself. She was allowed but a thousand pounds a-

year for her pin-money, she said, and if men pinched their wives in that manner they must expect outstanding bills for necessaries which no woman on the face of the earth can do without. Old Crab must be very unreasonable, indeed, not to be satisfied with this answer: he did nothing but growl at her, however, and took leave to say that "many a man kept himself and his wife and a family of ten children upon less money, and owe no more than he could pay at the year's end." "She had heard of more being done by less," she said, "in old story books, but miracles had little to do with the present times; it were very like, indeed, that a country parson that lives in a pig-stye, 'should know what was enough, or what was not enough, for the expenditure of a woman of distinction." "Miracles have very little to do with the present times, that may be true," quoth Old Crab, "or who knows but you might come to set folks a good exam-

example? But the devil has lain so long in your body, that it would be no easy matter to turn him out of his old lodgings, and still less so to keep him, when he was cast out, from running back again to his old quarters." Thus Old Crab and Mrs. Decastro would spit sulphur at one another for an hour together, and whatever love Old Crab might have for her, she very certainly loved the devil a great deal more than she did Old Crab: and though she had told him that she hated the sight of him a thousand times, she had taken such a liking to him all on a sudden, that she even sent a man and horse express to fetch him out of Berkshire, as soon as a man could come. Mrs. Decastro had taken it into her head that she had a great many friends in London, but as soon as her husband was said to be a beggar, and she no better, she had a very hard matter to find one. Prosperity makes friends, but adversity tries

tries them. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro's friends, however, were very much like water, the very first hole that was made in Mr. Decastro's estate out they all ran at it: current friends, though not sterling, that came with money and went with money; they stuck to Mr. Decastro's gold like dirt upon a guinea, that comes with it and goes with it;—and the best friend at last that they had to their backs was Old Crab, a rough piece of stuff, but sound stuff. Old Crab was solid silver, many other of their friends were but plated; after a little use their surface got rubbed off, and they showed their base metal. They that treat others ill, are always the first to expect to be ill-treated themselves. Conscience, a fractious brat no nurse can quiet, will be bawling in their ears, and never let such as do ill have any rest. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro, glad of an opportunity to be revenged on Lord Delamere, upon a quarrel, the cause of which we dare not ex-

explain; nay, glad even to buy one at any cost, (what better use could money be put to ?) turned him and his family out of the house with malice enough to enrage the most good-natured conscience in the world. Now came the scourge and the guilty back together! and in sad truth, if Mrs. Decastro had been in a House of Correction she would have felt less than she did in this, for there a little hard labour and a little whipping, and all would have been over, but here she had no quiet day or night.

Mr. Decastro had a very fine property in Berkshire, and a noble mansion built on one part of it, but Old Crab could not so readily find a purchaser for it as he did for the house in town; he sold a good slice of it, however, to a neighbour, but still had eighty thousand pounds worth left upon his hands; which he disposed of in the following manner. He had a little orphan put under his care, named

Ge-

Genevieve de Roma, a sister's only child, whose parents were dead. Her father, who was a Jew, had amassed much wealth in the Indies, and, dying, left it all in ready money to his daughter, to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds. The prudent Jew, knowing Old Crab, appointed him her guardian and trustee, leaving orders that seventy or eighty thousand pounds should be laid out in land for her use. Old Crab saw this would be a good opportunity; the land was excellent, and the house new, for Mr. Decastro's father built it, and situate in a county which some have called; and, perhaps, with some truth, the Garden of England. Lord Delamere, in want of a house in the country, took it on a good lease of Old Crab, and the business in Berkshire was done: he was now, therefore, at leisure to read Mrs. Decastro's letters; when, telling the man, who came express with the last, to get along back again to town, and

say

say he was coming, he mounted the box of a stage-coach and soon made his words good.

On his return to London he found Mrs. Decastro in a sad taking. She had had a fit, but was recovered, for one told her that Lord Delamere's carriage was at the door; which was a lie, and, perhaps, the only one that was ever told in London. It was a wonder it did not make greater disturbance. Mrs. Decastro, however, was so astonished at it that she fell into a fit. "O sir," said she, upon Old Crab's entrance, "I am glad you are come! O what a dreadful situation I am in!" "If you don't like it," said he, "you may change it for another." "What right have you, sir," said she, taking fire, "to sell my house? Was not the whole of my fortune sold out of the funds to the last shilling to buy it?" "What's the woman brawling at?" quoth Old Crab; "your fortune was not put under your

direction

direction and appointment which brother John got a license to tie an ass and a fool together. You'd better hold your tongue till you can talk about what you understand, woman!" "If the house must be sold," said she, "what, in the name of heaven, did you sell it to Lord Delamere for?" "Seventy thousand pounds," quoth Old Crab. "I think I shall go distracted," said she, if raving can be called speaking, "you know what I mean—the man is my enemy—he will turn me into the street." "I know it," quoth Old Crab, "and sold it to him to chuse, and for that purpose." "For what purpose?" said she. "To get you turned out," quoth Old Crab. "But you'll come out now without being turned out, perhaps, when I call for you, and I shall be ready in a few days to return into the north." "What a fool was I," said she, "to give away myself and my fortune in this manner! I always thought this house and furniture

niture my own, for my money bought it, and that no creditor of my husband could dare to lay a finger upon it!" "It is not the first time you have thought wrong," quoth Old Crab, "by a pretty many, madam, let that be your comfort." "Comfort!" cried she, "what comfort have I left me? am I not at this cursed fellow's mercy to be insulted and turned out into the highway?" "I suppose," quoth Old Crab, with a grin, "you do as you would be done by." This put Mrs. Decastro beyond all patience, and she flung out of the room like one mad. She had not been gone one moment, however, before she bounced in again, and almost ran her head into Old Crab's teeth, who was coming out. She made two or three attempts to speak, but something choked her, at last she tossed herself upon a sofa, and fell a crying. Old Crab leaned upon his oaken towel and stood and looked at her without speaking one

word.

word. A flood of tears gave her a little relief, when she leaped off the sofa, and coming up to Old Crab, who stood his ground, though he did not know what to expect, she said, "I am reduced to the necessity of begging for your protection." "You would have done yourself more credit, if you had not asked for it," quoth Old Crab, "and me too if you had not thought it necessary. But out of this place you shall come, or I will put a ferret into the house that shall make the rats bolt, and you too, madam, amongst other vermin—but I have something else to do than stand talking to a doll. A word with you: this day week, at two o'clock in the morning, I shall call for you and the children to go back with me into the north: be ready at the time." "How are we to go?" said she. "In the stage-coach," said he. "I never was in such a thing as a stage-coach in my life," said she. "This will be the first time

time then," said he. "But shall I be safe here till you come?" said she. "Trust to me," quoth Old Crab, and away he went: and those words from Old Crab were as good as another's bond. As soon as he was gone she fell to pack up her clothes and her jewels, which are sometimes the first things that run in a woman's head, and the last things that quit possession of her heart. A footman came in soon after Old Crab's departure to ask her if she would chuse to be at home to Lady Budemere? If Mrs. Decastro had any female friends at all, the Countess of Budemere was certainly one; the servant had orders to introduce her ladyship. After the usual salutation, they talked in the following manner.

Mrs. D. O my dear Lady Budemere, was ever any poor unfortunate wretch in such a situation as I am! Delamere has repurchased our house —his insolent triumph over us will

break

break my heart—I know not what to expect, or how much misery will come! we can but be ruined, and that I believe we are, for all our estates put together will not half pay our debts! What will become of us heaven only knows! The children and I are to be packed off into the north next week in a stage-coach. I have not seen a creature, but yourself, since Mr. Decastro left London; the Groves, you know, are in Scotland: you and Mrs. Grove are the best friends I have in the world.

Lady B. I am sorry for you, with all my heart. If I can be of any help, of any comfort or assistance to you, command my services. As to money, Lord Budemere's affairs are at present in such a way that you cannot expect that; any thing else, my dear sister—

Mrs. D. O I am sick of money! don't talk about money—if my fortune had been secured to me, I could have set the world and all its malice at defiance.

fiance. This house, which I always thought my own, and for the best of reasons too, because my money bought it, I find I cannot keep. O my dear sister! in what ignorance are we women bred! how are we left at the mercy of the other sex! and, what makes matters worse, when not one in a hundred of them is an honest man! Can we call our persons, our money, or our very souls our own? souls! what is a woman's soul good for after a man has robbed her of all her money; or her person, when she is no longer worth a farthing? who cares a farthing for her when she is not worth one? She is no longer better than a bit of dirt, and it must be a very little bit of dirt, or it comes into land, and gets worth scratching and biting for. If a woman that is turned down loose in the world with her pockets full of money goes ten steps in it without getting plundered, she must move in an uninhabited island! The only comfort

comfort I had left me when my husband ran aground, was the thought, that I had a good house of my own, which none could take from me, bought as it was with my own money, which, if I could not afford to live in it myself, might be let to another who could pay me a good rent for it: when the first thing I was told, after this Old Crab came to town, was, that it was sold, and paid for, without so much as a word said to me about the matter! When the mouse is catched 'tis high time to examine the trap. One's money must be laid under tie, it seems, or it falls to one's husband as soon as one is married. O if I had but known that before! if there were one knot in the world harder to be untied than another, I would have tied up my money in it ten times over, before it should have lain thus loose at the mercy of my husband's creditors!

Lady B. A woman's education, my dear sister, goes no further than to make

make a pretty plaything of her for the men; though we may go a step further, and say it is a lure, she is rubbed with honey to draw the flies to devour her.— But this is idle prattle—I am come to offer you my services; can you command me in any matter? can I take any thing to keep for you that may not be safe here,—any trinkets, such as your jewels, for instance, or any piece of plate? will you come to us and bring the children?

Mrs. D. O my dear sister! if there is one thing on earth that I dread more than another, it is the being seen at this time: it is given out by my orders that I am not in town: I must tell you a secret, which will explain matters a little,—I have some nasty play-debts upon my hands which I cannot pay unless I sell my diamonds: I would not have it known that I am in town for the world; I owe a certain lady, Mrs. Margaret P. you know whom I mean, two hundred guineas—

there never was such an old ferret for a card-debt: she is ten times worse than a grocer that duns for plums and sugar: her carriage was five times at the door last week; my people told her that I was not in town; she told them they lied, and would come in and see; well, up stairs came the old toad, and hunted the house for me till she fairly ran me into a closet! Besides her, I owe five hundred guineas to different people, most of whom have done me the honour of several calls; when one and the same answer was given to them all—that I was gone out of town for a little time.

Lady B. But, my dear sister, now Bat is come this will not serve; he will tell no lies for you, you must not expect that. But what did my brother Bat say about Lord Delamere? Does he know of the quarrel between the families?

Mrs. D. What does he not know? He knows every thing, and gets at every

every-thing by some means. He certainly is the last man I should expect to have any dealings with the devil—to give him his due—

Lady B. Well, but what did he say? you pressed your situation—

Mrs. D. Can you doubt it? I fell into an agony in his presence—and I might have kicked and sprawled about the floor in convulsions for any thing he cared about the matter; he stood in the room like the statue of Hercules leaning on his club, and took no more notice of me than if a great cat had squalled. I was a fool for refusing to leave the house; he told me he sold it to Lord Delamere on purpose to get me out; he might have sold it to another else: I pressed my situation over and over, and all he said was, "Trust to me."

Lady B. Then you are safe, you may take my word for it; Bat never said such a thing and deceived one afterwards: as for deceit it is not in

him, nor ever was: he is rough enough, but there never was, nor ever will be a more honest man. It is the greatest good luck in the world that he is come again into your matters; he will spare no pains to do his best for you: and you have this for it too, there is a hope that something may be done for you: if it had been a lost case he would not have undertaken it. To give you a little comfort, I think you are more frightened than hurt: when I say this I mean that something will be left to live upon after all is paid. You have run furiously on of late years certainly, but my brother John's property is very large, and Bat is rich; he has been saving money while you have been spending it: take comfort, my dear sister, matters are not so bad as you may think. As for your calculations, as you call them, I don't think you and my brother John put together can count a hundred once in ten times with so many beans in a bag. It is impossible

sible that you should owe as much as you say: I am sure John knows nothing about figures, and, if you know no better, the more such accountants come together, each does but put his errors to the stock and makes them more.

Mrs. D. One seldom makes a blunder to one's own benefit: heaven send us both dunces, if any thing may be got by it!—But, pray do you know any thing about this old family place in the north—a castle I think they call it?

Lady B. I was born in it, but left it too soon to recollect the least of it. Our ancestors lived in it for many generations: but my father was too gay to live so much out of society; he bought his place in Berkshire, therefore, and built upon it, to get a little amongst folks, and more into the light of the world. This old family place has been neglected now so many years that it can be little better than a heap of

 ruins.

ruins. I will tell you all I have heard of it from others: it is built on an island in the middle of a lake, an island containing about three thousand acres of ground, one third of which is covered with wood. The island rises in the middle like a round hill, though not very high, upon which hill stands the old castle, which looks at a distance as if it was stuck in the middle of a thick wood. There is a fine bunch of oaks on one side which hides all but the towers at the corners of it: the wood, which is composed of very stately trees, grows round the edge of the island like a broad ribbon, and forms a verdant zone next the water, which, and the water together, shut the world out as if it was a thief. The castle was built by one of our ancestors who came over with William the Conqueror; his name was Athelwolf Decastro, who took it into his head to quarrel with the world because it was not good enough for him, so he turned up his nose at it

and left it, and ran into this secluded place to get out of the smell of it. The castle is built of stone, and the outer wall of it is four yards thick; it is built upon a square, with a high tower at each corner. The inside of it, I have heard, is, a good deal of it, cabbined off into small apartments, but there are some very large rooms in it: the roof is covered with large broad plates of solid stone which are supported with whole trees by way of rafters, laid down with their branches on them, which is said to be a great curiosity. My lord and I have intended, these two or three summers past, to take a trip into the north, and see this, and other oddities there; but one thing or other has always stood in the way.— There are no other houses on this island, my brother Bat's farm-house excepted, unless it be a few fishermen's cottages. On the south side of the lake is the ferry, where boats are kept for any that would pass the water, and

on the opposite shore stands a great post with a horn chained to it, which is blown to call the ferryman. My brother Bat's farm-house is as old as the castle, and of all the neat farm-houses in the world is said to be the neatest. He rents a thousand acres of my brother John, which is nearly half the island, that is of the unwooded part of it: the rest lies in pastures called the castle lands; they used to be well stocked with deer in my father's days. Bat is vastly fond of this place, and would bring John to live in it, and his argument for it is, that a man and his estates cannot be too near together; but this is now quite impossible, for, if the place is not a ruin, it would take a very large sum of money to make it at all fit to receive any human being, and what money can be found must now go another way. If one had a mind to bury oneself alive I don't know a fitter place for it than in this old castle; there is scarcely a house within

a day's

a day's journey, except Mr. Grove's at Hindermark, and that, by all accounts, looks like a place built by a man that had committed murder, and had run away to hide himself for fear of getting hanged.

Mrs. D. This old castle must be a dismal place by your account of it; but I think, in the mind I am, I could be glad to run into a tomb to get out of this house, and out of London.

CHAPTER VI.

How Mrs. Decastro was frightened in her Bed—Old Crab paid his Brother's Debts—how Mrs. Decastro and the Children get safe out of London in the Dark.

THE two ladies had a great deal more talk together, but perhaps the reader has heard enough of their chat:—for, if it were not for the music of their sweet voices, and the pretty looks of their pretty faces, who could have patience to hear their tittle-tattle for five minutes? for who talk more that have less to say? and who say so little in so much talking? But do not the men talk as much nonsense as the women? Yes, as much as the women could for their hearts if they were not the most silent animals of the two. Lady Budemere took her leave with many very kind assurances, and they did Mrs. Decastro's

Decastro's heart good to hear them, certainly,. but brought little help. Now if a house be on fire and there is a lady in it she is apt to get the fidgets; Mrs. Decastro was in a like taking, and quite as restless. She did a thing, however, which, perhaps, she would not have done in it if it had been on fire, and that was, she went to bed in it. How she slept, or what she dreamed about, we never could come to know; but she was terribly disturbed very early the next morning with as much knocking and noise as could come if fifty people were taking the house to pieces. She rang for her maid to know what on earth was come to the place? when she was told that there were workmen in almost all the rooms in the house, taking down the furniture, packing it up, and handing it into waggons which stood ready at the door to receive it. Mrs. Decastro leaped out of bed as if she had been bit by a

snake in it, and was not quite so long a dressing as she had sometimes been when going to a ball. One woman has great spirit where another would be frightened out of her senses; Mrs. Decastro, as soon as she had covered what nature, who has been pleased to put clothes on every other animal, hair, scale, or feather, had left naked, boldly sallied forth amongst the workmen, and asked by whose order it was that they carried the furniture out of the house? She was answered, "by their master's orders;" and that was all the answer she could get, except from one, who asked her "what part of the house she could have lived in not to know that Lord Delamere had bought the place? And what was become of Decastro and his wife, and what stone they could be made of to run away and leave their children to be turned into the street?" This put the poor lady to flight in a moment, who had

no little reason to think that Lord Delamere had sent his people to turn her and her children out of the house; her conscience could not but tell her how much justice there was in it, but she did not much like the thoughts of it for all that. She ran up stairs and, locking herself into her room, threw herself upon the bed and wept for ten minutes together.—It presently came into her head, however, that she was not making the best use of her time, so she jumped up and sent a note to Old Crab, begging and beseeching him by all that he held dear, or sacred, to come to her that moment; but he was not to be found, so the servant left the note for him at the Old Hummums where he always put up, and returned without any answer. If Mrs. Decastro sat upon five-and-twenty thorns before, she now sat upon fifty, and, what added to her prickings, a party of at least twenty of her acquaintance came into the house with no more ceremony

ceremony than if there were a public auction in it, to look at the place and enjoy the downfal of poor Mr. Decastro and his family. It had been given out, certainly, that neither she nor her husband were in town, and that the house was sold; so far they had an excuse, and they walked out of one room into another with quite as little ceremony as if it belonged to Mr. Nobody. We must leave the reader to guess at poor Mrs. Decastro's situation when she heard their well-known voices at her bed-room door, and some hand make an attempt to open the same, and in they would have come upon her all together, if she had not bolted all the bolts which she could find. A storm cannot last for ever— and a calm usually comes after it— the house now became quiet, but not until every apartment except three had been totally disfurnished! These three were the nursery, Mrs. Decastro's bed-room, and the kitchen: and Mrs.

Decastro, upon asking her maid what was become of all the servants, was told that Old Crab had paid them all off except one nursery-woman, herself, and the cook. The coach-houses, stables, cellars, all were cleared, the windows all shut, and the house looked like one uninhabited. Mrs. Decastro and the children, however, had all their wants supplied, except some artificial ones, which were left to be any body's masters.

As soon as Old Crab got back to London out of Berkshire, he called a meeting of his brother's creditors, who, being seated, a hundred of them at least, on each side of a long table with nothing else but a green cloth upon it, Old Crab asked them if they had a mind to eat him? for they gave him such an hungry look as if they came to pick his bones. Now out came all their bills at the word of command, and Old Crab was almost smothered in paper! In meetings of this sort

there

there is for the most part one or two more impudent than all the rest, who take upon themselves to be the mouth of the company: now one of this kidney was present here, and quite as impudent as any that ever opened his mouth upon such an occasion. He arose, as if he thought folks could not see too much of his person, and asked Old Crab what they were to expect in the pound? "There might be five shillings," said he, "for what he knew, and they might think themselves well paid if they got as much as that. He would see, however, what could be done for them." So taking their bills, one by one, Old Crab put them orderly upon a file, and telling them that they should have notice when he was ready for them, dissolved the meeting, which was held at the chambers of Petticraft the attorney. Now there was one Sir John O. amongst Mr. Decastro's creditors, of whom money had been borrowed, who, having no mind, perhaps,

to soil his person amongst a crew of dirty tradesmen, came into the room after the rest were gone out of it. "So, sir," said he to Old Crab, "you are come into your brother's affairs again, I find, and, from all I can learn, it is a pity that you ever left them. Your brother is a bankrupt, I am told; how are his matters to be arranged, and what are we to look for in the pound?" "I must know myself before I can tell you," quoth Old Crab. "When is that like to be?" said Sir John. "You may know some day, if you don't get hanged first," quoth Old Crab. "If you had come into the room sooner you might have heard what I said to the rest of the gang, if you had brought your ears along with you." "I never had the honour to meet you before," said Sir John, "but I have heard you were a rough one; perhaps you will give yourself the trouble just to say when we are like to have a dividend?" "Others have asked the same question

and

and are as like to wait for an answer," quoth Old Crab; "pray who the devil are you, you speak as if you would be thought to be somebody?" "I am Sir John O. and one of the creditors." "Sir John fool's-head!" quoth Old Crab; "why the plague didn't you come into the room among the rest?" "Sir John fool's-head!" said the Baronet; "pray, sir, what do you mean by that?" "Mean!" roared Old Crab, "why I mean to speak English—did your mother never tell you there was such a language? Why didn't you come into the room with the rest of the gang, I say; must I call one meeting for them, and another for you, ye great blockhead?" "Blockhead!" said Sir John, "I don't at all understand such words!" "Then," said Old Crab, "you may go and look them out in the dictionary!" Upon which he took up his file of bills and walked out of the room with his hat on. Folks will be civil to a great man though

they

they hate him worse than the devil; now Old Crab did not hate Sir John O. though the devil himself might have looked for a little more politeness. No civil distinction, how illustrious soever, weighed one feather with him, who, to give him his due, had much rather find a virtue in a great person than a fault; for great men, Old Crab used to say, catch the common eye, and people were more apt to imitate what they see in them than in others. If a man be a great man people think that every thing he does must needs be great too, and will do as he does to be thought so. Another of his sayings was, To take a rascal to be an honest man till you found him out to be a rascal was civil, but to take an honest man to be a rascal until you find him out to be an honest man was safe. He played his part in the world with so much caution and prudence, that some were a little given to think he kept himself upon the safe side of the question,

question. But Old Crab was always more angry with a great man who did amiss than he was with a little one. Examples, he would say, that came down from on high came down with greater weight and force upon those below, and did mischief in proportion to the elevation from which they fell. But to return: Old Crab, on his way from Petticraft the attorney's chambers to Grosvenor-square, passed his brother-in-law Lord Budemere's house: his lordship, standing at his door, and observing Old Crab to cross the way to get by and escape him, whose conduct of late he had by no means approved of, called to him, and very civilly asked him how he did, and invited him into his house. "What should I come into your house for?" said Old Crab; "I am not best pleased with you nor your house either, and don't care how little I see of you or your house, not I." "I am very sorry for it," said the earl, "and could be

glad

glad to see you oftener; and however I and my house may be out of favour with you, we shall be at all times very happy to see any of our relations in it." "Aye," quoth Old Crab,, "you can tell them so to their faces and wish them at the devil at the same time. What should I do in your house but make you tell more lies than you have told already?" "Come," said the earl with a good humoured smile, "you always say worse than you think; I had rather a man should tell me that I lied to my face, than tell me a lie to my face, and tell me by what he did that I lied in what I said: but I really am glad to see you, brother Bartholomew, though I own I have told many a man that I was glad to see him when I was not; but we who live in the world must do these things.—I am indeed glad to see you, for I much wish to ask you about our good brother John's matters, and, if you are not very much in haste, you will oblige me by coming in a little,

you will I assure you. What immense bundle is this which you have in your hand?" "Why, 'tis the scoundrel's bills," quoth Old Crab; "I am come from a meeting of his creditors." "Well, but we cannot talk in the street of these things," said the earl, taking Old Crab in a friendly way by the arm, and leading him into the house. "If we can't, there are enough that can, and in a pretty many streets too; I don't know what the plague should make you so devilish mealy-mouthed," quoth Old Crab, "not I." Upon which his lordship introduced him into a magnificent room, full of a world of fine folks, of whom Old Crab took not the smallest notice. As soon as he was seated in the midst of all this gay company, and there were at least twenty people in the room, Lady Budemere came to him, whom Old Crab either did not see, or, perhaps, did not look for; "Well, brother," said she, "I suppose I must come and speak

speak to you if I expect to be spoken to, or be overlooked." "If you were less look'd at and more look'd after, it might be as well," quoth Old Crab; "what have you got to say?" "Why this," said she, "I hope you find my brother John's matters in a better way than you expected; I own I think they are more frightened than hurt." "It is no great matter what you think," quoth Old Crab; "it were odds but you think that you think right I warrant, if you did not, there were enough to put you in the head of it, that's one good thing comes of your rank in life; and if you are in the wrong you are not like to find a friend to tell you as much. How I shall get this lame dog over the stile I shall not say, but if he be seen no more in this place there will be no want of profligate scoundrels to keep vice in countenance with grandeur and opulence." "You think opulence and profligacy convertible terms?" said Sir Harry St. Clair, who was one

of

of the party. "I should be loth to tell you my thoughts," quoth Old Crab, "if I cared a rush for offending you; hark ye, young man, the next time you come out to ask questions some might take you for Solomon if you brought a fool's head along with you." "You had better not talk to him, Harry," said Sir John O., who happened to be there; "you will get nothing but abuse. It is not long since he gave me a cast of his office, and if he had not been a parson I would have kicked him out of the room." "Your first kick would have been your last," quoth Old Crab, "for I would have broken one half of the bones in your body to have taught the other half good manners: you are one amongst my brother's creditors, if I have not forgot the braying of an ass?" "I am, parson," said Sir John, "though no more an ass than yourself." "It is good luck to be a fool," quoth Old Crab, "for none are so well pleased

with themselves: did you owe my brother a grudge that you lent him your money? It is the world's charity for one to lend another a helping hand to the devil!" "Well, parson," said Sir John, "canst tell what my four thousand pounds are worth? Petticraft says there will be but five shillings in the pound." "What!" exclaimed Lord Budemere, "are matters so bad as that?" "Poor Mrs. Decastro," cried Lady Budemere, "it makes my heart ache indeed to hear this! But tell us, my good brother, has Petticraft any good grounds for saying so?" "How should I know any thing about Petticraft and his grounds," quoth Old Crab; "he may know more than I know, and if you want to know what he knows you may go and ask him." "Why," said Sir John O., "Petticraft told me that you told the creditors so yourself." "I spoke in the subjunctive mood, you blockhead; and if you don't know what that is you may go back to school, if you ever

were at one, and look into your grammar." "Really," said Sir John, "this language is intolerable," rising from his chair and coming up to Old Crab in a threatening manner:—" I shall not make any disturbance here—you will have the goodness to follow me into another room—I have a little business with you." The baronet was in such a rage he could scarce get breath to speak: Old Crab and he walked out of the room together and Lord Budemere went with them. Old Crab, thinking that the baronet had something to say upon his brother's matters, for so he construed the word business, was not at all prepared for what followed, for the moment they came into another room Sir John called Old Crab an impertinent rascal, and struck him a violent blow on the head. It was a little lucky for the baronet that Old Crab had left his oaken towel with his hat and his bundle of papers in the other room, though good fortune was not all on his side, for a doctor had come to visit

visit a patient in the house and left his hat and cane upon a chair at hand, seeing which Old Crab seized Sir John O. by his collar, and gave him the doctor's cane as long as it held out, and to the baronet's cost it was a pretty tough one and somewhat larger than a man's two thumbs put together. Sir John was miserably beaten, for he could no more contend with a man of Old Crab's vast strength and stature than he could with old Hercules, and was not a little glad to see the cane fly in pieces and get rid of the iron ferrule which armed its point like a thimble, and gave him a great deal of trouble. As soon as Old Crab found nothing to be left of the cane in his hand but the golden head and the silk ribbon, he let his victim go, and asked him if he had a mind to give him another knock on the pate? The baronet made the best of his way out of the room without saying a word, with his clothes very much torn about his neck and shoulders.

 "Now,

"Now, kinsman," said Old Crab to Lord Budemere, who stood by to see the fun, "who was it that struck the first blow?" "Why," said he, "Sir John O. was certainly the aggressor, and broke the peace." "And my pate, at the same time," quoth Old Crab, wiping the blood off his face, that trickled down his cheek very fast from under his wig. The doctor, who had done with his patient, one of the servants who was ill of the gout, came into the room for his hat and cane, and seeing Old Crab very bloody, asked him what was the matter?—Being told, he put him upon a chair, and, taking off his wig, found a very deep cut in the side of his head which went to the scull and laid the bone bare an inch. "Why," said the doctor, applying some lint and styptic to the wound, "this cut could never come from a man's knuckles:" upon which Old Crab looking at his wig, which he held in his hand, found it to be cut through as

if cut by a knife. As soon as the doctor had staunched the blood and dressed the wound, which, coming from an hospital, he was prepared to do, on making his bow to Old Crab upon receiving his fee, he kicked something with the foot whose office it was to make the scrape upon the floor: looking, he picked up a large snuff-box, upon the sharp edge of which blood was found and some of the hair of Old Crab's wig sticking to it; this explained matters, and more clearly when Lord Budemere showed the baronet's crest and cypher on the lid of it. The box was a square one with sharp corners, and the doctor observed that such an instrument might have given a man his death-blow; Old Crab, however, put on his wig again, and felt little more of it. When he and Lord Budemere returned to the company, and the earl told the story, the room rang with laughter, and Sir John, because he was well thrashed, was, of

 course,

course, called a great fool; which is quite the way of the world if a man be the general of an army; for to be beaten is a mark of folly, and it certainly makes a man look like a fool.

Now we by no means take it upon ourselves to defend Old Crab in this matter, for though he was afraid of nobody, it by no means follows that he therefore might abuse every body; he would have his saying for all that: and though there are a great many things in Old Crab which it would be well if every man would imitate, we would advise this to be set down amongst his faults, and moreover as a matter that would be attended with no little danger in the imitation, even though a man, a thing that very rarely happens, were as large and as powerful as Old Crab.

No jest is immortal—this, which was a very good one at the baronet's expense, died away and all the laughter along with it. His basting confined him

him to his bed for a week: but of this thus far. Now a great many questions were asked, but none were answered, upon Mr. Decastro's matters, and Old Crab left Lord Budemere's house just as full of wisdom as he found it. Old Crab was a very close man; he had a very good rule for keeping a secret, and that was, never to tell it to any body.

Mr. Decastro's debts amounted to the vast sum of one hundred and ninety thousand pounds; his property, however, in London and in Berkshire, when the whole of it was sold, aided by the last year's rents, put money enough into Old Crab's hands to pay every farthing which his brother owed in the world. Willing to keep the matter as much a secret as possible, for some reasons best known to himself, he called no more public meetings of creditors, but coming to each man's house, told him in his ear, that if he would keep the thing a pro-

found secret, he would pay him the amount of his bill; but must take it for an especial favour. He served every man the same, and set them all a laughing at one another in their sleeves, each thinking himself to be the lucky man. Sir John O. however, would not see Old Crab, though he came with four thousand pounds in his pocket for him, which he was fain to leave in Petticraft's hands upon the execution of a legal receipt.

To return to Mrs. Decastro,—she got another terrible fright before she got out of London. Now, what teeth and claws are to a lion, horns to a bull, poison to an adder, fear is to a woman, the means of self-preservation: and what matter how the thing be done, if it is done, and well done? Great teeth and claws will tear their way through, but fear saves all the trouble of biting and scratching by keeping out of harm's way. Now Mrs. Decastro had teeth and nails it is true,

but

but a great deal of fear into the bargain, and ought to be, upon both accounts, very safe, if one had not unluckily stood in the way of the other: for what are teeth and claws if fear comes in and prevents a lady from using them like a lion? Now, some are never content with a book unless it has *reflections* in it; and others think they only stand in the reader's way and hinder the story: hence it follows that a writer must needs be able to do two things at once, to please two readers; this comes of people having different tastes. Now this is all very fine and very sublime, but it has nothing at all to do with Mrs. Decastro: we will come to what has, then,—she had been forced to breakfast, dine, sup, and sleep all in the same room for several days, at which she felt extreme disgust, not because ladies cannot, or do not do this, but then it must be when they take it in their heads to be ill and keep their rooms. Now Mrs.

 Decastro

Decastro was very well, and, what is more, chose to be so, and, as for keeping of rooms, that she could not do, and for this reason, because they were all sold; and her greatest grievance was upon this account—she was in the house of another, who certainly would have turned her out if he had known she had been there. Lord Delamere knew, indeed, that the children were in the house, but, to give him his due, he was too much of a nobleman to wreak his vengeance upon such as had never offended him. On the day before Mrs. Decastro's departure his lordship's carriage stopped at the door to the no small consternation of that good lady, for she heard the carriage come, and, soon after, his lordship's voice in the house; which, from being disfurnished, echoed the more, and made every noise more terrible; for empty hollow rooms are apt to sound, and nothing quicker than a lady's ear when she has a mind to be frightened:

Mrs. Decastro could have been glad at that moment to have been put into a sack and trundled out of London in a wheel-barrow. Some blamed Old Crab for being so severe; he said the severest diseases called for the severest medicines: and, at another time, upon the same objection, he said, folks had as good reason to call a surgeon severe in cases of amputation and lancing of inveterate ulcers. It was no such easy matter to cut out vices without giving some pain to the patient, and, in moral matters, the more the better, for it was often that the pain did all the business. What would be the good of a sound whipping if there were no pain in it? of a cuff, or a kick, if nobody felt it? In regard to profligacy, said Old Crab, what can be done in obstinate cases, where calm advice is not only disregarded, but laughed at, thrown away, as some throw medicine away, and will not take it? Money makes folks saucy, profligate, and hard-hearted:

 his

his brother and sister had both used Lord Delamere very ill, and it would have served them right to have brought him into the house to have put them both out by the shoulders. This was true enough; for it cannot be denied that when Mr. Decastro paid down the balance of the house's value over and above the debt, he and his wife were in such a hurry to be revenged on poor Lord Delamere, that they would not give him time to find a place for his children, though he begged for it, but turned his nursery into the street in the snow, for it was a bad day in winter when the thing was done, and they were glad to get shelter in a butcher's shop: it must be added, however, in justice to them, that they were very sorry for this thing afterwards. Old Crab, however, whose maxim it was that whosoever did amiss ought to be punished for it, was determined to make Mrs. Decastro smart for this inhuman usage of Lord Delamere,

mere, who, to give her her due, was the most inveterate of the two against him; and to give her her due too, was the most sorry for it afterwards; and smart she did, if fear can be said to make one smart, when she heard Lord Delamere's voice at her room-door, for he actually came to it, and would have opened it, and come in, if it had not been locked and bolted: and one of the workmen, whom his lordship had brought with him, and to whom he had been giving his orders, was heard to say, the door is fastened, my lord, shall I force it open? At that instant Mrs. Decastro fell on the floor in a fit, and it was well she did it without making any other noise than a great bounce on the boards. "Let matters be," said Lord Delamere, checking the man, who had a spike-bit in his hand, and would have forced the door, "if the children are in that room, I owe them no ill-will, they will be gone to-morrow: but you heard how mine were used?"

used?" "Yes, my lord," said the man, "and every body else, and it would serve Decastro's brats but right to unkennel the whole brood of them, and put them into the street." His lordship answered, with feelings that did him honour, "I can't find it in my heart to treat the poor children ill." Saying which, his lordship turned from the door and went into some other rooms. Mrs. Decastro soon got the better of her fit, by which she got no hurt but a broken elbow, and cast a ghastly look all round the room for Lord Delamere, and was glad enough not to find what she looked for. One of her little boys, who ran to the door to listen, told her what Lord Delamere had said, and, strange as it may seem that a kind thing should have so keen an edge, this act of mercy cut her through the heart. It by no means eased her of her fears, however, for she came not within the meaning of this act, and her danger still remained

as great as ever, if her being in the house should come to his lordship's knowledge. People that hold themselves high in the world have but the further to fall when they come down, and it is odds but they do come down some day. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro had held themselves very high, and that was very foolish; for the fear of being seen, now every body knew how much they were humbled, gave Mrs. Decastro more pain than a sound whipping. Old Crab felt no mercy for proud folks; he never said one word to her about the debts being all paid, which had been glorious news, but left her and her pride to fight their own battles, and she found to her cost what a serpent she had cherished in her bosom. But if we begin to preach, our readers will serve us right if they fall asleep. As long as Lord Delamere was heard in the house talking to the workmen, Mrs. Decastro had the fidgets:

fidgets: if she sat down, she would jump up again just as if she had set down upon a great pin: if she walked about her room, she catched her feet up as if the floor burned her toes; every little noise appalled her, and she would start at times as if she saw a ghost! She spent this last day in an agony which nobody can describe, so we hope to get excused in not attempting it, notwithstanding every writer is expected to do impossible things; such, for instance, as write books without any faults in them, and get abused too for not doing so. At last this day came to a close, which will be the case, when the sun goes down, with most days, and night came and brought some repose to Mrs. Decastro; for the spectre that had haunted the house great part of the said day, walked out of it, and Old Crab, known by his heavy boots and oaken towel, came thundering up the stairs to tell Mrs. Decastro that the stage-coach would

be

be at the door at two o'clock in the morning; and it was as good as his word, for it came at the time, and Mrs. Decastro jumped into it with as much joy as if she could have jumped into Paradise.—Now the talk of the town was as follows: viz. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro were said to be gone into Italy by some, and to Paris by others, who seemed to have good grounds for what they said, because they had seen some who had actually seen them in both places at once, which was not the first time people had been seen in one place when they were two or three hundred miles off in another. Old Crab cut off one source of intelligence on purpose, perhaps, for he paid off every servant, (except his ward's nurse, for little Genevieve resided at present with Mr. Decastro's children, who could not speak English,) and that some days before he took Mrs. Decastro into the north. The creditors could get no more than five shillings in the pound,

it

it was said, and for this reason, viz. because there was no more for them, and, though there might be a better, folks seemed content with this. Sir John O. however, was said to be the only exception, who had threatened to bring an action against Old Crab for his basting, and had, therefore, been paid all his money to stop his mouth, and the law, that was coming out at it. But we have not told the reader how many children Mr. Decastro had, which were a sad neglect,—he had two boys, the eldest was called Frederick, and the youngest, an odd little boy, was called Acerbus. Little Genevieve was Mrs. Decastro's niece, of whom more presently. Well, now we must leave Old Crab, Mrs. Decastro, the children, and all the furniture of Mr. Decastro's house in town, for none of that was sold, travelling along the great north road, and run on before all to Oaken Grove, and see how matters stand there.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

How Mr. Decastro employed himself while Old Crab was in the South—how he ran his Head against a Post—the arrival of Old Crab, Mrs. Decastro and the Children—how Mr. Decastro bent his Rib, that is to say his Wife, to his liking—Mrs. Decastro grows very wise by being made a great fool.

We hope thou art in good wind, reader, for this is like to be a long chapter.—Mr. Decastro's affairs gave Old Crab a world of colic and trouble: he had been at the pains to cast up every bill and examine every article in every one of them, and had struck off no less than a thousand pounds which came of blunders and false reckonings, &c. There were some creditors of a peculiar colour, who brought in what folks call debts of honour; of these Old Crab would not pay one farthing; there was a great deal more paid, however, than had been

at all expected, and most people were not only contented, but overjoyed, to see so much money come in where so little had been looked for. This business kept Old Crab two months in the south; a handsome present was offered, but Old Crab would not take one farthing for his trouble. A handsome present! why, where could handsome presents come from? Have a little patience, reader, and you shall see: But why should he refuse it? did he think it too little? or did he think none large enough? or did he think it beneath his dignity to accept any? or did he think none of his services could deserve any? or did he think a present quitted an obligation? Thou art vastly inquisitive, reader; but it is no mean art in a writer to keep his reader upon the look out, and his curiosity awake. But, as we were saying, his brother's matters gave Old Crab a great deal of trouble, and a great knock on the head, upon which last thing a great many

wise and shrewd observations might be made, but, some how or other, we are not much in the humour to talk upon this subject at present, so we shall put off knocks on the head until we get to our chapter upon the coming together of solid bodies, wherein all sorts of knocks will be taken into due consideration:—one great bounce excepted, which belongs more especially to this, and we shall now proceed to give an account of it: Mr. Decastro, in his brother's absence, gave himself much to deep meditation; many matters engaged his thoughts, he walked a great deal by himself, and talked to himself, and shed a world of tears over his past follies and his present misfortunes: he had got into such an odd humour for crying, that even a taste, or a smell, a touch, a sound, or a sight, would bring the water down his face as if it were a church spout: his water came from him in such an abundance that

he

he was more like a pump than a man, he had got into such a way of weeping and shedding of tears. Mrs. B. Decastro did all she could to comfort him, and little Julia would bring her chair close to his, and sit and mend her stockings, and sing to him, but all in vain; the poor gentleman was like to go distracted: sometimes he would smite his forehead, and, fixing his eyes on the ceiling, say, he was a beggar, a ruined man both in this world and the next; not worth twopence, and that he should come to some untimely end: at other times he would fall to cursing of London and Berkshire, and all living creatures in them down to the smallest creeping thing that creeps upon the earth; London he would call a nursery for hell, whence men, women and children are transplanted into it like brocoli and cauliflowers in a garden; that do what he would there he must come at last as sure as a log of wood

wood to a fire. Mrs. B. Decastro counselled him very wisely to bear his troubles like a man, bade him to look for her husband and good news to come together; that fits and starts, raving and tearing, would do more harm than good, an unexpected card might come to be a trump and mend his hand; that if the worst came, her husband, who had put a penny by, could take care of him and one of the children, and Mrs. Decastro and the other might go to her friends who were well in the world, until better stars came up; that it were unwise to take the worst for granted until the worst were proved to be the case:—these, and other the like pieces of advice, Mrs. B. Decastro would put into his ear; and the sweetness of her voice, and the tenderness of her manner, not a little aided by her beauty, would lull the poor gentleman, and put all his scorpions to sleep in his bosom: they slept, indeed, at times, but

but it was to gain more strength, invigorate their stings, and replenish their poisons. He would jump out of his chair sometimes, after a little repose, and fling out of the house without his hat, and little Julia would often run after him with it into the fields. "My dear uncle," she would often say, "how happy we should be if you were happy! My papa will not let those terrible men whom you so much fear come to fetch you—he will not tell them where you are, sir; then how can they know, when you are so far off, where to find you? they cannot put you into prison if they cannot find you, sir, and who can tell them where to find you so many miles off?" "Your papa is a very just person," Mr. Decastro would say, "and would not hide a man from the law who owes any thing to the law—he will give me up, my pretty little niece; he will tell my creditors where to find me." "O but he will pay them," she would answer,

"and

"and satisfy them, and then they will not come to take you, sir." Then Mr. Decastro would fall to weeping, and poor Julia would cry for company. Poor man! his worldly troubles were great, but, as if there were any need, he had other troubles now, and these came from his late acquaintance with religious matters; he could not chuse but cast an eye back, now and then, upon a life mis-spent in atheism, vice, and the service of wicked passions; and, though he had run away from all other creditors, conscience knocked at his door with a long bill. As to his estate in this world, he conceived it to be utterly ruined and lost; and he began seriously to look to what might be saved in another. "This religion," said he, "of which my brother has given me such an account, would, if I had known any thing about it a little sooner, have answered a DOUBLE purpose; for, if I had lived by its rules, all would have been well with me every

where in this world, as well as in the next; for no one thing on earth takes better care of a man's money than Religion, for it bolts the door against every sort of vice, profligacy, and extravagance, the very thieves which have robbed me of my all! Its rules are so excellent, that I am sure it has nothing in it, or about it, but what is true; it proves itself by itself; a man needs but to examine it to believe it to be divine. I have no comfort left but what comes from it, thanks to brother Bat for instructing me in it: I had gone mad, or out of the world by my own hands, but for its kind and timely help. Great as my troubles are, and great as my fall from what I was to what I am, yet the promises and consolations held out to me by this my new acquaintance, bring me a strange and an unexpected comfort. But it will take me a great while to reconcile myself to the estate of a poor man who have been a rich one. I shall feel

want

want in twenty places where a man, who has been born and bred a poor man, does not feel any want at all: this must be expected: what can be done? I am at present but a young man, and may look for many years to come in this world: where can I go, how hide myself, where live unknown?" Raising his eyes at that moment, and looking round, his extensive property on all sides met his view; the thought at that moment that it might not be his, made the poor gentleman weep sadly. How the loss of a thing endears it to one!—one should be without a thing to know its value: when a thing is one's own it is too near to be seen as it ought to be: another must take it a little in his hands to shew one all its beauties and its worth. "My dear paternal lands, and woods, and waters," quoth Mr. Decastro, raising his wet eyes as if to take his last farewell of all his inheritances, "and thou, venerable castle, in which I first drew

 breath,

breath, adieu! I find too late how dear all are to me, and feel a pang which old friends feel at parting!" Sobs would then interrupt his speech, and he would throw himself upon the ground in a sad agony, and say, that he could not so much as call his body's length of it his own! While he was rolling upon the ground, and he certainly might have been better employed, little Julia stood at a distance with a letter in her hand, but was too much frightened to come near, for she thought her uncle was in a fit, when giving a sort of plunge in the agonies of his mind, he rolled round with his face towards her, and leaped up as if ashamed to be seen by her in such a taking.— "My dear uncle," said she, "what is the matter? have you had a fit?" Mr. Decastro looked a little silly, and fell to brushing the dirt off his clothes as if to be employed. "I have a letter, sir," said Julia, "come for you from papa, I hope it brings you good news."

He

He took it and walked away with it, without so much as speaking one word. Julia, who had a great curiosity to know the contents, for the little girl was much grieved for her poor uncle, crept after him at a distance to watch him, while he opened and read the letter, which came from Old Crab. He walked on in an hurried step until he came to a thick holly-bush, when he broke open the letter with as much agitation as a thief breaks open a house to steal its contents, and read as follows in a voice loud enough for little Julia to hear him; who crept after him as aforesaid, bringing his hat and stick, which she picked up where he took it into his head to roll about on the ground:

"BROTHER JOHN,

"I HAVE paid all your debts, and set you clear of all the world: but it hath cost you all you were worth in the south to do it: all the property in the north is still your own. A plank hath

 been

been saved out of the wreck, it is the furniture of your house in London—it is on the road to the north—I shall set out with your wife and family in three days time.

"Yours,

"BARTHOLOMEW DECASTRO."

Little Julia, hearing this good news, ran away to tell it to her mother, notwithstanding she heard a great noise in the bush where her uncle stood; she thought, however, that he had too much good news to come to any harm, so she ran to tell it to her mother. Little Julia was but a morning star at that time, just risen in the east of life—now, reader, that pretty thing is put in to please the ladies; don't you look cross at it, or at any other the like strokes; for if they are pleased you will look like a fool to stick out. —Suppose a man die, and we call him a setting sun, what's that to you? one in the occident of life—and the ladies

all

all smile and cry "what a pretty thought!" what a plague need you curl up your lip? If one be best pleased to find a diamond, and another be best pleased to find a barleycorn, what good comes of grumbling if you claw up the stone instead of the grain? it is but to take another scratch, as the fable has it, and you may find what you want, like the old cock upon the dunghill. Read what book you will, my good friend, depend upon it you will find something that you don't like; if you are a gay man the first grave sentence will set you a swearing; if serious, and two lovers fall to kissing, it will make you jump as if you saw the devil! But to return to little Julia and her mother,—"Why, Julia," said she, "where in the world did you pick up your uncle's hat and stick? good heavens! not by the water-side I hope? I have some time thought him scarce fit to be trusted

alone by the water-side.—I hope he has not drowned himself? Though it were no wonder if one so distracted as he should run to the first door to get out of such a world of troubles!"—"No, mamma," said Julia, "my uncle is in that great holly-bush, on the hill yonder, there,—just where you see that bird flying.—He has got such good news in his letter!—my papa has paid all his debts—and the castle, and the island, and every thing here is all my uncle's! He is a rich man again, and I am so glad—I dare say he will let papa have his farm for nothing." Thus the little thing ran on, laughing and crying by turns, and squeezing her uncle's hat between her knees till it was like any thing but a hat. "Why, Julia," said her mother, "where did you get this letter? I saw but one letter and that was for me." "I met Old Comical with it, mamma, and he told me to run with it to my uncle."—"Well, well," said she, "I have a let

ter from your papa as well as he, and know all, and am as much pleased with this good news as you can be or any body—but go and take your uncle his hat, and then come to me; I must send you with a message to the castle." When she returned to Mr. Decastro she found him sitting on the ground and his face very much scratched and bloody. Poor man, his troubles had brought him into so weak a state that the unexpected good news overcame him, and he had fainted and fell amongst some of his old acquaintance, the thorns and the briars, and scratched his face. He kissed his pretty little post-woman for her letter, and she ran back to her mother, to take her errand to the castle.

Now this magnificent old place had been taken care of by Old Crab, who was very much attached to it, and had a desire to bring the owner into it to live amongst his estates and tenants in the north: and this his care had cost

 but

but little, for the walls were so thick, and the roof so strong and massy, that the house did not want much repairing. It was more like a rock than an edifice, and looked as if it were cut out of a solid block of stone like a statue. All the old furniture had been left in it; for the late Mr. Decastro, being a rich man, had a mind to have every thing new in the south: so he left a place of sterling grandeur and magnificence, and took up with a piece of modern tinsel in the gay county of Berkshire, that cost him a great deal of money to build which might have been brought to better account. If greatness was his object he certainly missed the matter, for a great man had looked much greater amidst lofty towers, fine painted ceilings, painted windows, and rich old tapestries, than stuck in the middle of a tawdry box near London, with every thing new about him as if he had been the first gentleman in his family. This might

have

have done very well for a grocer who had put by his plum, and had a mind to show folks what sort of thing a gentleman should be;—but, for a man descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors—but enough of this. The old castle was now to be made ready for the reception of Mr. Decastro and his family, and it needed little to be done, for Old Crab had always kept two or three old women in it to sweep and kill spiders, open windows and make fires; he was fond of the place where he was born, and it was not like to come to damage under his care: so little Julia's errand was to run and tell the old women to sweep, air, and light fires in all the rooms that were like to be wanted, and the same day Mr. Decastro's furniture arrived from the south. Old Crab's letter to his wife was as follows:

"Dear Wife,

I look to be at home on Friday. I have settled John's affairs and paid

his debts, and it took an amazing sum of money to do it. All the property in the south, some furniture excepted, has been sold to the last penny, which, with the rents in hand, made up a purse big enough to pay all that could be legally demanded. I paid one hundred and ninety thousand pounds away before I could shut my hand: a prodigal dog! I am glad to hear from you that he is penitent. I have kept him in the dark in regard to matters on purpose; and if he had been chained and bolted down in the dark with a straight waistcoat strapped upon his body, a man less mad than he might have been turned out of Bedlam in his place, and done less mischief in the world. I expect the goods will be come on the day you will receive this letter. John, if he have not drowned or hanged himself by that time, may see the things put in their places, and do you give him money to pay the waggoners—but not one farthing until

til the goods be looked to that there may be no damage. N. B. The waggoners are answerable for all by contract, signed and attested. The two old services of plate are packed in four chests, marked 1, 2, 3, 4. I would have them put into my study for the present. I shall bring my ward Genevieve to our house, till matters are settled at the castle; get the little blue room ready for her and her woman. I am pleased with your account of John Mathers; I believe I have made him an honest and a steady fellow. Tell him if he goes on well I will make him my clerk when old Grimes dies, which thing will be twenty pounds a year. He was a mad-brained scoundrel at Gottingen, but I begin to have some hopes of him. I have met with great insolence in London while engaged in John's matters. I thrashed one Sir John O. who gave me a bang on the head: and flung an impudent scoundrel of a perfumer through his own

shop-

shop-window into the street, and half a score great staring wooden dolls that stood in it, along with the rascal. N. B. Say nothing to John about the old leases that will fall at Michaelmas. Remember me to my little wench.

"Dear wife,

"Your's affectionately,

"B. DECASTRO."

The heart that feels pain at another's troubles is made amends by the pleasure it feels at another's joys; Mrs. B. Decastro had one as kind and as tender as any woman in the world; the tears fell fast into her bosom and her lap while she read her husband's letter, and how water comes to have so much to do with both joy and grief is a curious question; but we must leave it at present to say what a hurry this kind-hearted lady was in to find Mr. Decastro, and communicate the good news, when she met little Julia on her way, who had already done the business,

business by giving him the letter aforesaid. As soon as Mr. Decastro had recovered himself a little from the great knock which his good news had given him;—for it may be remembered that he was beaten down into a holly-bush by the force of it, and had scratched his face; poor man! he had very little strength to spare when the weight of a letter could bring him to the ground;—as soon as Mr. Decastro had recovered himself, he did a thing which he had never done before, returned thanks for his good news, and, strange to tell, actually fell on his knees to do it! and this little Julia saw him do, who came running back with his hat, which she had run away with in the wildness of her joy to tell her mother the very good news that her mother knew very well already. "My uncle is a better man than papa thinks him to be," said Julia, "for I saw him kneel down and say his prayers, mamma, after he received my

papa's

papa's letter." "He could not say his prayers at a better time," said Mrs. B. Decastro; "it is fit that they who have most and pray least, should come to want something to pray for; and when great things come where but little was expected and less deserved, if it is not enough to teach folks to be thankful, I don't know what is: I am glad to hear this; it is a sign that your uncle is coming to his senses, for I am sure he has lived like one out of his wits ever since a madman was his own master: but run to the castle, Julia, and bid the old women air beds and light fires,—tell them that your aunt will come from London on Friday."

Mr. Decastro now came out of his holly-bush, and, being on an eminence, cast his eyes round on his estates with as much pleasure as if any body had just made him a present of them. How all this could be he could not tell, and began to pinch his arms and legs to see

see if he were not in a dream. It now occurred to him that he and his good lady must have run into some little error in their calculations, and few men, perhaps, were ever better pleased at making a blunder: for if no blunder had been made all he were worth in the south would have flown like chaff before the breath of his creditors. He read Old Crab's letter over twenty times and found it to be just the same the twentieth time as when he read it at first: he then put the letter into his pocket and cut three capers for joy. As soon as his capers were over, he walked down to the margin of the lake and fell, not into the water, but into a deep meditation: but not knowing ourselves what he was thinking about perhaps we shall get excused if we do not tell our readers. On he walked in rather a quick step, muttering to himself and staring at the ground until on a sudden he bounced his head against a post, which might have got out

out of his way if it had seen him coming, but it had been all the same if the king had come. Now this great bounce against the post put Mr. Decastro in mind of opposition, opposition of contradiction, and contradiction of his wife,—a very notable concatenation of ideas, and by no means inconsequent. Mr. Decastro now began to talk to himself in this manner: I begin to find that I have been a great fool—and that is one step towards getting wise, for he who thinks himself wise already takes no pains to become so: this is brother Bat's doctrine, and I think there is something in it; but though I have been a great fool my wife has always been very wise though she was never able to account for it, or what place all her wisdom came from. Now I suppose with a little pains she can be made fool enough still to think herself the first female intellect on earth, and may be induced to forsake the world if she can be made to think herself above

it,

it, else how will these solitudes and unfrequented shades go down with her, in the midst of which I am come to a mind to take up my abode? As to the world I am not fit to live in it and will have done with it; a man should be made of flint to live in it, and not of wax, to be moulded in its fingers to what forms it pleases. I am one of that same ductile substance; this impression, however, is hardened in me, he that is the most in the world is the most in harm's way: but my wife sticks in my throat,—how shall I get her to be of my mind? One that has so long been used to gay things, music, balls, and crowded rooms, how will she like to stretch her elbows here, where there are no assemblies, no routs, no press of fine folks to squeeze the breath out of her body?, where she may walk for a month and never get trod upon? come into a room without being suffocated, or even have so much as a gown or a petticoat torn off her limbs? Something

thing must be done, for what woman can live without getting her flesh rubbed off her bones in a crowd, or her ribs crushed together when all the world is in a room? My bones come no more into these mobs, I have been squeezed enough to content any moderate man, they are welcome to my room who shall never be again welcome to my company: these London mobs will crowd a man's house until there is no room for the master—they have elbowed me into the street once and that's enough: they shall elbow me out of no more houses, and, thanks be to heaven and my good brother, I have yet a good one left and something left to keep it warm too, more by all than ever I expected—I'll feed no more splendid gangs to eat me out of it—but my wife rises upon my stomach again like a thing that is hard of digestion,—what shall I do to macerate and assimilate her into my plans? I am not very fond of forcing medicines

in these matters: a woman is like a weathercock, if she goes stiff, a little sweet oil will sometimes do the business—we must oil her over when we meet, and see how matters will be; then a little breath of wind, perhaps, will turn her like the weathercock aforesaid." Mr. Decastro was walking at a good pace during this his soliloquy, for he was one of those extraordinary men who could walk and talk at the same time, when he stopt short all on a sudden, just as if he had run against another post,—a thought arrested him, that was the reason, and not, as some philosophers conjecture, because his soul had forgotten, at that moment, what string to pull, so pulled none at all, and left the machine of his body to come to a stand-still. Now there being a thick wall of brambles on one side, and the waters of the lake on the other, if Mr. Decastro's soul had made any blunder and twitched this string instead of that he might

have

have got drowned, or scratched, or set upon his head with his legs in the air,—no—a thought struck him, and took up the attention of his soul so much that she threw down the reins of his body for a moment as if she had nothink else to do but think—a plan came into his head to manage his wife, to govern her and please her at the same time. Now such a thought as that were enough to stop the earth in its orbit, turn its poles to the sun, hang the tropics upon the equator, make folks stare and sweat at Baffin's Bay, and the gentlemen who live in the torrid zone, call for their great coats and worsted stockings:—look you, reader, every bad thing gives a handle to pull some good thing into play; Mrs. Decastro certainly had her good qualities, but the soil of her mind was crowded with a promiscuous vegetation, here a weed and there a flower. It is a very amazing matter, certainly, to find a woman with any bad quality at

at all in her composition; there is not one woman in ten millions that has any fault at all, and this made Mrs. Decastro a greater curiosity, for she had a fault, and that fault was vanity, a very new and a very extraordinary thing to be found in a lady.—It will be seen what uses Mr. Decastro made of it; he caught fast hold of her by it, and led her,—some men drive their wives like cattle,—led her where he pleased, and pleased her where he led her too—he made a great fool of her certainly, but what signifies that? it was a sign she was not born one, for then she would have been a fool ready made to his hand. There are male fools plenty, but there never was such a thing as a female fool, nor ever will be until the world is turned upside down.

Great things are seldom brought to pass in a little time; the project which Mr. Decastro had now upon the anvil cost him much thought, labour, pain,

and oil.—But of this thus far. Matters were now prepared at the old castle for the reception of his family; the beds were all warmed, rooms well aired, owls and jackdaws smoked out of the chimnies, toads as broad as a pair of bellows, and lizzards as long as a man's leg, had been driven out of the cellars, and the spiders had all notice to quit with a great broom at their tails. Mr. Decastro's dead stock had been come some time, and disposed of in the proper places under the eye and order of himself and Mrs. B. Decastro, when the day came to bring the living. Now Mr. Decastro was walking, as usual, on the banks of the lake in a deep muse upon family matters, with more running in his head than was running out of it, his hat pulled over his eyes, his hands thrust into his breeches' pockets, and his cane stuck in his left boot, when, all on a sudden, he ran against Old Crab, who took it into his head to stand still, seeing him a coming, and

put

put out an elbow to receive the momentum of his brother's body. "How now, brother John?" quoth he. "I have brought your wife and family out of the south—hold up thine head, man, and look the world in the face again—all's paid, and your creditors kicked out of the creation." Mr. Decastro was much affected at the sight of his brother, but we have not time to draw his picture, when bouncing upon Old Crab on a sudden made him feel just as if his heart was dipt in cold water. Shaking of hands and many thanks for services now passed, and sundry questions upon divers matters. —"What, is all mine in the north, brother Bat?"

Old Crab. Every acre, John, and the old castle to boot—all's sold in the south: but you will find bread and cheese here, and a good house to eat it in, if you have wit enough in your head to keep a good house over it, and know when you are well. I have just

put your wife and family into the castle, and come out to look for you.

Mr. Decastro. Well, but how can this be, brother Bat? my wife and I made out the aggregate debt to be——

O. C. A fool's reckoning—and what else could be expected when two fools laid their heads together? I paid away one hundred and ninety thousand pounds to redeem your body from your creditors, and your soul from the devil, I hope, at the same time, which is more to the purpose; for both were in a hopeful way, this running as fast into hell as that into a jail, and that they might both do at the same time and go the same way.

Mr. D. Brother Bat, the talk which we have had together has made another man of me: I believe all that you have told me to be true because I cannot prove it to be false; and I am apt to think it no very easy matter to deceive me; for, though books and I were never much acquainted, I

never

never heard of a fool being born in our family,

O. C. Peace be to the fools, John! I remember when your mother was brought to bed of an ass; and the way in which you have gone on for some years past puts no great addition to the wisdom of the family: but you are come to be another man, you say, pray what sort of a gentleman is he?

Mr. D. One of your own making, brother Bat, as far as opinion goes; I am brought over by your arguments to your creed; there is more in them I will fairly own than I ever expected to find, or I can gainsay, which weighs not a little with me: I have got my catechism by heart, since you have been gone, can answer any question in it, and understand both question and answer by the help of your little book of explanations: in a word, I am become a christian and am willing to be confirmed the first opportunity.

O. C. All's well if you hold in the

 mind,

mind, John; and you have been a stubborn piece of stuff:—be but as obstinate in the right as you were in the wrong, and you shall be made a missionary by order of government to convert London to christianity; and it is high time it were looked to before we send out another cargo of parsons to convert the savages, when there is so much work to be done at home. I can't see what the plague can be expected in foreign parts when they have let the devil beat them upon their own dunghill.

Mr. D. The conversion of the place is like to be put off for the present, if it waits till I come into it; for by the glory of the stars I'll never run my head into the smoke of it again as long as the motion of my body lies under the direction of my will.

O. C. I say again all's well, brother John, if you hold in that mind: you have enough left here in the north, now all's paid, to live like a nobleman amongst

amongst your tenants, and keep up the credit of the family: the old mansion-house is never the worse for wear, and I am sure no gentleman needs be ashamed to live in it: it is a noble place, brother John, the more's the pity the family should ever run away from it.

Mr. D. When I leave it, brother Bat, you shall read the burial service over my body—when I go out of it I'll go out of it with my heels foremost and a wooden suit upon my back—I'll go no more amongst the vipers and scorpions of the world—I have felt their teeth and venom in my flesh—If I go into London again ram me into a cannon with a charge of gunpowder at my tail and shoot me into it.

Q. C. I say again the third time, all's well, brother John, if you hold in the same mind; it is early days with you yet, time will try matters. Let

us walk up to the castle, your wife and children will be glad to see you.

Mr. D. One word, brother, one word—

O. C. What dost hang back for, man? You're not afraid to see your wife?

Mr. D. Not altogether afraid, brother Bat, but one word—did she come in good humour, ha, brother Bat? how did you get her out of London?

O. C. Get her out! Why, she was glad enough to come out, though she hung back a little at first, till I stuck spurs to her—she told me to my head that she would not come out; the devil you wo'nt, madam! said I, but I'll make you glad to come out! so I sold the house over her head, packed up the furniture, and sent it into the north.

Mr. D. That was one way to bring her out. But to whom did you sell the house, brother Bat?

O. C. To the man you had a quarrel

rel with, Lord Delamere—just the right sort of ferret to make the vermin bolt—this turned the tables, and instead of a hard matter to get her out, I had a hard matter to keep her in; she would have pushed the devil out of the way to have got out. When you bought the house of him, she and you together turned the man and his children into the street in a very civil way, with a pitchfork at their tails. If you have forgot it, she remembered it, and expected the pitchfork in her's; and she should have had it, if she had hung back. You will not come out? said I; but foregad you shall dance out when I play you a tune on the fiddle, I'll warrant you! I held my lord in check, or he'd have smoked her skin for her! The man would have set his own house on fire if he was sure of roasting her alive in it! He was so ravenous after her flesh, that he could have eat her with a bit of salt. She was in the devil of a

 fright!

fright! I never saw a woman in such a hurry to go the right way in my life!

Mr. D. I very well remember our usage of Lord Delamere's family, and am, I fairly confess, very heartily sorry for it. But no insult, I hope, was offered?

O. C. None at all. But come, it gets late, and I want my dinner.

And that was a very good reason for Old Crab's impatience; whereupon they walked into the castle.—We promised something more to come in our bill of fare to this chapter, but as it has run on to be something of the longest we hope to be excused if we put it at the beginning of the next.



CHAPTER IX.

Old Crab snaps at his Brother for telling Lies and making a Fool of his Wife—he, that is to say Mr. Decastro, sends his Sons Frederick and Acerbus to Eton School—some Account of Old Crab's Ward Genevieve de Roma.

MRS. DECASTRO was very much disappointed at the sight of the old castle, not because it was worse, but because it was a great deal better than she expected to find it, and this was a very lucky thing, and put her into very good humour. Old Crab had told her the debts were all paid, but not what was left to live upon; this, having cast up her husband's accounts, she conceived to be very little, indeed nothing, for the balance, as she had made it out and her husband together, lay all the other way; a circumstance which added not a little to her astonishment when she was told that they were to live in so grand a place. She posted about from room to room, found silk in

in this, satin in that, fine old tapestry in the other, and gazed with rapture and admiration at the painted windows and painted ceilings; but where the money was to come from that should keep them in such a place was the greatest wonder of all. Mr. and Mrs. Decastro falling to figures gave a very lucky push to Old Crab's plan, and added not a little to their panic; they got frightened indeed more than came to their share, but it gave no inconsiderable furtherance to their reformation; add to which, vanity ran on the side of their blunders; they took it in their heads that they knew too much to be deceived, and they were willing to believe themselves ruined ten times over, rather than think it possible that such wise folks should commit any error in their calculations. Two people were never more glad to look like two fools, than when Old Crab let the cat out of the bag, and told them, for their comfort, that they were a couple of blockheads, that they had enough left, after

all

all was paid, to set them up as great people in a great house. No two individuals ever confessed themselves to be great dunces with more satisfaction.

As soon as dinner was over, and the reader may remember that dinner was ready, and Old Crab very hungry at the end of the last chapter; as soon as dinner was over, at which two old women waited, which looked a little odd in such a magnificent place, but a new set of servants had scarcely as yet come into Mr. Decastro's head, as soon as dinner was over—we shall come to the point presently, as soon as we can get all these parentheses out of the way—as soon as dinner was over, Mr. Decastro caught his wife by the chin, as his manner was when earnest in any matter, and spake as followeth, videlicet:

Mr. D. I am going to make a confession which will astonish you more than ever you were astonished in your life: I have long since made a discovery, which I have always kept to myself,

myself, that you were a great deal wiser than me. I see, by your smile, that you are humble enough to take this for a thing said in jest, but you do yourself too much injustice, and my discernment at the same time, to suppose, that you have not a great deal more sense than me, and that I have not the penetration to find it out; if it be at all doubted, however, I can give some proofs of it. Your leaving London so readily is a sign that you have the good sense to despise it, that you lived in it not because you could not live out of it, but because I lived in it, who was not above it but in it; immersed in it, and in love with it, you saw that town was my toy, my plaything, and though above it yourself, humoured me in it as a child. All this I have seen, but felt too much envy at your superior sense to own it till now that I am grown another man, a metamorphosed thing from what I was. To know and to confess that you are wiser than me, argues no mean alte-

alteration in me. My brother Bat has taught me some new lessons, one is to pay every body what is due to them, whether it be money or merit, I therefore come to put his lessons in practice, and pay you what is due to you. I have been a long time your debtor, the debt is never the less due because it is long due. The gay and idle pleasures of the world, I own, I have ever been much in love with, notwithstanding the rare example I had daily in my sight, I mean yourself, who indulged me in my toys, and seemed pleased with them yourself, on purpose to please me, whom you loved as one loves a child, and pities at the same time he loves it. But I am now come to a determination to have done with these things, and am willing to put myself under your instructions and advice how to get that contempt for all the fashionable follies of the world which you were ever ready to teach me had I but been as ready to learn. I am now come to a determination to bid

bid adieu to all those gay scenes where snares are laid to take the silly, and traps are set to catch fools, where no substantial joys are to be found, but pleasures empty as the heads that follow them. I am now come to a determination that London and its neighbourhood of enchantment shall see me no more. It can very well spare one fool out of so many, and feel no more loss than if one single drop of water were taken out of that noble river which has run through it and washed it for so many years, and yet leaves it every day more dirty than it found it! It has cost me a world of money, my dear, to add to its vices, its follies, and its impieties, and it is now my determination that all this money shall not be thrown away, it shall purchase my freedom from that harlot's embraces, the threshold of whose habitation is a stepping-stone into hell. Look, my dear, I have torn myself away from her, and in this venerable old castle will I live, and in it will I die, where

my ancestors lived and died before me. I grew too fond of her not to hate her, too much in love with her not to detest her! She has her sweets, but her sweets are poisons; she has her charms, but they attract to damnation; they will pull a man into the bottomless pit, my dear, if he does not stand his ground thus (setting his foot) with a stiff heel, and pull with all his might against them. But this is no news to you any further than that I see, now my brother Bat has opened my eyes, what you have ever seen, and I was blind to. With what patience have you endured my ignorance! how long must you have been disgusted with my folly! I am now come to a determination, however, to make you amends by learning of you to despise what being once fond of made me so despicable, the tawdry pomp, the show, the pleasures and follies of the idle and the gay, that lie so far beneath the exalted dignity of your mind. It shall go hard, but I will become a hus-

band

band more deserving of such a wife; and in order to it I put myself into your hands like a child; you must guide my feet, teach me how to walk, and lend me a hand until I can go without falling. My brother Bat has told me that he who is high in mind is low in merit, I humbly call upon you therefore to help the weak; to look down upon me not to despise me, but to pity and raise me; not to think that I beg of you to give you credit for more than you are worth, but to bestow an alms which will make me rich without making you poor, for kind advice is not the least of alms-deeds. But one thing stands much in the way, the fear you may have to be thought to govern your husband, which every woman of good sense would sooner die than be thought to do; to remedy this, if you are not seen to pull the wire, I shall be thought to dance of my own head, while a better moves the puppet behind the curtain.

Wise people are above the applause of the world, they do good for the sake of it, not for the sake of getting praised for it; so all the credit I get by doing as you bid me will be thought to be my own, while you enjoy not only the internal satisfaction of it, but the superior gratification of doing good to another without arrogating any merit to yourself. My brother tells me that you were very glad to get out of London, now the thing I would be taught is to be glad that I am come out of it too; I would wash the taste of it out of my mouth, I would get rid of all relish for its pleasures and allurements, all which you have the good sense to give up with as little regret as a child's playthings, which you would make as if you liked to please a child.

Mrs. D. All you have just now said is very surprising, my dear, and argues a very great change in your sentiments and opinions, so great that I could scarce believe that it were you that have been talking: and I must confess

that

that you certainly would have been much wiser than you are, if you had more frequently taken my advice, and been less obstinate in your own way: in regard to the pleasures of the gay world which have cost us a great deal and left us very little to show for it, they are little less than empty shells without kernels, chaff left by the wise for fools to purchase at ten times the price which they buy the grain itself for; this I believe to be very true, and we have had some experience of it which we shall do well to bring to good account. But in regard to our own matters, we have fallen into some very unaccountable errors which I own I am not a little astonished at, and how it could come I cannot see. If you had let me alone to cast up the bills and accounts by myself all might have been right enough, and we had no occasion to have frightened ourselves out of our wits in this manner; but you must poke in your nose, puzzling, and put every thing into confusion;

sion ; I am glad, however, you see your own insufficiency at last, and find whereabouts it is that the fool sits in the family.—Yes, I confess, I am above the silly pleasures and pursuits of the gay world, and ever have been, and have dropt hints to that purpose from time to time in your ear, to just as good purpose as if I had taken a flint and steel and struck sparks into a bason of water. I am glad your brother has brought you to your senses; for he that has no sense himself can never be expected to see it in another : it is, as you say, a proof of very superior sense to despise what the mob admire, a sign of a refined taste to feel disgust at what the vulgar love, and that you should find at last this sense, this taste, in me, brings me as much as any thing to believe that your brother has most certainly opened your eyes ; and I shall feel a very great respect for him as long as I live, upon that account more than any other ; for it is my opinion that a husband who cannot see when his

wife

wife is wiser than himself must be blind indeed. Now, my love, I must fairly own that I never heard you speak so much to the purpose, and so much truth in my life as you have just now done: not that I think any more highly of myself at all for what you have found in me, it is no news to me, but that you should have come to the knowledge of it is news indeed, and very much raises you in my good opinion; and I certainly think that the only way for you to come to be deserving of such a woman as myself, is to put yourself entirely into my hands, and leave the sole management of yourself and all your concerns to me. Every blunder, every mismanagement, every false step, and every foolish thing that has been committed in our family ever since we have been married, I think you have now the good sense to allow, should be entirely set down to your own account—your own pride, folly, obstinacy, self-conceit and self-will;

will; and if the management of all had been wisely left to me, no ill thing at all would once have befallen us. I dare say, now your eyes are opened, you can see this very plainly, if not, you had as good take some more of those excellent lessons you speak of from your brother Bat. I cannot help laughing to think how many women of fashion, like myself, would die at the sight of this lonely old castle, and these solitary woods which embrace it so closely with a thousand arms, inclose it on every side as if they were afraid that it should get legs and run away! But to one who has so many resources in herself as I have, there can be no such thing as solitude, no dull and vapourish melancholy, bred alone in uninstructed, low, and vulgar minds, that have not one amusement that does not depend on the will of another: for I call that a low and vulgar mind, whether it inhabit a palace or a cottage, that must run to others to

set it at ease with itself; that must needs be wheeled about from house to house, from party to party, from theatre to theatre, from rout to rout, to make the very union of soul and body tolerable! Put yourself into my hands, my dear, put yourself entirely under my government, and I will finish in you what your good brother has so well begun.

Mr. D. But what if it be said that you rule your husband, my dear? How shall we avoid such a sad scandal as that? If I could get instructed by you without your being seen to rule me—

Mrs. D. If I tied you to a bed-post and gave you a good flogging every morning as soon as you got up, and every night before you went to bed, who is to know any thing about the matter in such a place as this, unless the oak told it to the ash, the ash to the elm, and the elm to the sycamore?

Mr. D. Very true, my dear; a

woman

woman might chop her husband into little bits, and make mince-pies of him, and none the wiser in this sequestered spot; but the truly wise and the truly good will be so in a wilderness where none look on, and well as in a crowd where all look on. I should be as much astonished to see a woman of so much good sense do a thing in an uninhabited desert which were like to disgrace her, as be guilty of an act of merit in the, middle of a town for the sake of being seen and getting praised for it.

Mrs. D. There is a glimpse of hope that all my good qualities will not be thrown away upon you—and I must own I have long since felt something like despair upon this matter. I begin to think better of Old Crab than ever; he certainly is a very sensible man; he had never opened such eyes as yours so effectually, and in so short a time else.——

Mr. D. Why, my dear, I should not have said so much in your praise,

cer-

certainly, if I had not known you to be a woman of too much good sense to hear it and get intoxicated by it—to be too much above all praise, to be at all influenced by it:—it is dirt under the feet of one whose head glitters amidst the stars.

At these words Mrs. Decastro arose to retire into the drawing-room, and a very grand apartment was prepared for that purpose, with a face so full of smiles that you could not have stuck a pin in it any where without running it into a smerk: some say that she staid till the very last moment in the dining-room—but what they mean by "the very last moment," we cannot tell; it made a joke, however, amongst the ladies, who laughed, when they heard it said, that she staid until the very last moment—but they will have a piece of fun sometimes to themselves....Old Crab, who had slept during great part of this talk between Mr. and Mrs. Decastro,

castro, and only catched here and there a sentence of it, now rubbed his eyes, and spake as follows:

O. C. It is no little mortification to a man of common sense that all the fools are not born dumb. To hear a thing of human proportions talk nonsense is enough to put one out of humour with the human figure. What a pity it is that a man should not only be a fool, but have it in his power to publish it by word of mouth! but the devil of it is, that the greatest fools are always the greatest talkers; just as if one needs talk as much as ten to convince others what a fool he is. I had rather see a fool vomit, at any time, than hear him talk; nothing could come from his stomach so offensive by half as what comes from his head. John, you cannot speak five words without committing a nuisance! What the plague d'ye tell your wife a pack of lies for to bring her over to your purposes? Why don't you tell her at

once that if she has not a mind to live here she may look for her lodgings and be hanged—pack up and march.— What an ass art thou to pickle a rod for thine own back! Make your wife madam uppermost and pull her down if you can. It is the whole work of some men's lives to keep their jades down and get nothing but their labour for their pains, and you must turn your own house into a school and go and take lessons of your wife in it, like a blockhead. You deserve to get your rump well clawed, and your head well combed with a three-legged stool. It is ordered that the woman be obedient to the man, be in subjection to her husband, and learn of him at home, and not he of her. What art at John? give your commands like a man, and not come down upon all fours like a brute, and bid the woman get upon your back and ride you like an ass. Adam must needs be such a fool as to be ruled by his wife and you see what came

came of it; and you will get turned out of your house as he was out of Paradise, if you let madam have her head. Thou art folly to the brim, John; thou canst not take more of fool than thou canst hold, all the rest runs over and is wasted.

Mr. D. Look you, brother Bat, you mistake my aim, I would keep my wife in good humour and rule her at the same time. Why take a cudgel when the thing may be done by a little sugarcandy? I hate a broil, and if I can oil her over I see no great harm in that.

O. C. You will mend matters finely by telling the woman a great lie, though her pride will be sure to make her believe it. Thou shalt not do evil that good may come, brother John.

Mr. D. It is a profanation, brother Bat, to bring in the Bible to such frivolous matters; it can have nothing to do with compliments paid to the ladies,

 it

it were irreverence to name its name in such light and ludicrous things.

O. C. I am glad the Bible hath your reverence at last—but a lie is no light thing, brother John: get a habit of a thing and get rid of it if you can; a bad habit is no ludicrous matter. I am glad to find, however, that you have been reading your Bible since I have been gone; for you cannot well detect another in quoting a book without having read the book itself with some attention. But you can find no rules set down in it how to cheat and tell lies, I warrant. Do as the Bible bids you and you cannot be wrong, do other than it bids you and you cannot be right, John: but more of this another time. A word with you, sir; you'll make this minx as proud as old satan, and if you and she fall out she'll cast your compliments, as you call them, in your teeth. You make her a goddess, and let her alone for exacting divine honours. Flattery is the key to

a woman's heart, it unlocks the door and lets in the devil; and when he once gets in it will be more than one man's work to turn him out again, for the casting out of devils was always called a miracle. It is a wife's duty to obey her husband, and it is a husband's duty to use no undue means in order to such obedience; but if a man raises the devil in a woman's heart by way of guarantee to the performance of it, she will obey the devil indeed, but soon set her husband at defiance.

Old Crab was very sleepy, and yawned several times during the above speech, which may account, in some measure, for the breaks in it, and the dulness of it; when, giving his brother an earnest that he would renew the subject at another time, he took his hat and stick and made the best of his way to his farm.

Able politicians agree that in the composition of all wise governments,

some evil is a very good thing; that is to say, if the devil have not some hand in the matter, there must needs be a sad flaw in the constitution. The devil is in it if all is not right then, when, if the devil be not in it, all must be wrong. Mr. Decastro saw, and wisely, that the government of a wife were a matter of such importance that he never stuck at the means when he had such an end in his eye. Gentlemen are to do as they please with their wives, if their wives will be so good as to let them, certainly, and if a woman be not sweetened to a man's taste until he has made a great fool of her, why, surely, no wise woman on the face of the earth can have any the least objection to that.

The ladies, we doubt, will lose all patience at reading so far without coming to any love in our book, we beg in this place to make our apology, and say, that they will very soon come to a great deal of it, if they can but be content

content for a little: there will be no less than three very pretty girls to be disposed of, and they will have the inexpressible delight to see them all fairly eat up one after another.

Now, reader, lest we grow prolix, you must help us out a little with your imagination;—imagine, for instance, that Mr. Decastro, feeling the money to spring in his pockets again, hired servants, bought horses, put deer into his park, wine into his cellars, carriages into his coachhouses, built pineries, planted graperies, erected hot-houses, and called all his little necessary matters about him; for, upon the falling in of some good old leases, Old Crab, his trusty and faithful steward, raised his income to the noble sum of three and twenty thousand pounds a-year, bade him leave off playing the fool, and live like a gentleman.

Mr. and Mrs. Decastro now began to be a little settled in their chairs, and, to the end that madam might sit the

more at her ease in her's, her good husband took care that she should have a soft cushion put under her particular. Every day discovered a new beauty, or a new excellence in her, which Mr. Decastro had never seen before.

SOME ACCOUNT OF GENEVIEVE.

But having just talked about three pretty girls, and made our readers mouths water, we will now bring them a little acquainted with Old Crab's ward, Genevieve de Roma. Mr. Decastro had three sisters, two of which were what the world calls well-married, that is to say, one married the Earl of Budemere, and the other a Baronet, Sir John Lamsbroke, of Lamsbroke Park; the third was what the world calls very ill-married, she married a Jew, named De Roma, who had two hundred pounds, and no more in the world. Now in the two former marriages there was a great deal of money but

but no love; in the latter a great deal of love, but no money. Now Margaret, for that was the name of her that bestowed her heart upon one of the circumcised, made her father exceeding angry at her choice, not because she chose a Jew, but because she chose one that was not as rich as a Jew. "Peg," said the old gentleman, and swore a terrible oath, a vice he had, "if you marry the Jew, I'll not give thee a penny; discard Abimeleck, and thou shalt lie in my will for a good round sum of money." Peggy, however, had no mind to part with her sweetheart, so she married him, and away they went together to the West Indies, and, what was very amazing, they did not sink the ship with the weight of their money. The Jew behaved like a noble fellow; he expected a large fortune with his wife; gold, however, was not the cement that stuck him to his Peggy, for her father was as good as his word, he would not

give her one farthing, but divided her fortune between her two sisters, who did not want money, and left poor Peggy with nothing but his curse to live upon. In a few years, however, the active Jew grew rich, and by industry, frugality, and care, got money as fast as he could count it. Abimeleck De Roma was honest and just in all his dealings, and much beloved; so much so, that a friend, who died in his neighbourhood, left him all his property; this, put to his own, set the Jew upon a mountain of gold. Now this was one of fortune's lucky hits, for once she bestowed her favours on a man of merit. But who can count a penny or a moment upon the good things of this world? Poor De Roma lost his Peggy in childbed of Genevieve, the only surviving child of eleven, and soon after died himself of a broken heart. Finding how matters were like to be, he converted all his property into money, and, leaving all

to

to his infant daughter, made Old Crab, whom he well knew, her guardian and trustee. The will directed that the little orphan's money should be vested in the English funds, and, if occasion offered, that good part of it should be laid out in land. If the little girl should die before she grew to be of age, or to be married, Old Crab, who had been disinherited by his father, should stand in reversion to the whole property; that she should be bred in the best school that was to be had, and suitably in all respects to her large fortune, which amounted at that time to one hundred thousand pounds. Of all children ever seen in the world Genevieve, during the first ten years of her life, was, perhaps, the most ugly and disgusting: but what astonished people the most was her size, vast strength, and fierceness of mind: she got the name of the young dragon, and none could manage her, for none she feared, except Old Crab, who

made no scruple to take a cudgel to her when she was in her *tantrums*, and give her a sound drubbing. At the age of ten she was sent to the best school in London, and, by the good management of the people there, her devil was cast out, or rather tamed, and she began to show some signs of beauty both in face and figure. She suddenly grew tall, and her face from being broader than it was long to grow longer than it was broad; her complexion, which had always looked like soot mixed with fuller's earth, cleared up into a fine brunette, and her features, as if touched by some magician's wand, grew astonishingly beautiful; her hair and eyes were as black as jet; the form of her face Grecian; she was very large, but finely shaped, and quite six feet in height.—But of Genevieve thus far.

Now, reader, we have made a great blunder, which, we dare engage for thy sagacity, thou hast long since discovered,

covered, and if thou hast not, thou art not a little mortified, we think, at its having made its escape from thine observation; but, perhaps, thou hast found enough besides to make thine acuteness ample amends.—We should have put the boys the first, and Genevieve the last, for so we gave it out in the title to the chapter. We may plead good-breeding, however, and let the lady go first, and the gentlemen, as is fit, come after.

The tables and chairs were now all set in their places at the castle, and every body knew where to look for salt, and where to find the mustard: the old women were put to scrub floors and wash dishes; and when Mrs. Decastro rang her bell, a butler, or a fine footman in a superb livery, made his appearance, and waited her commands: and as for Mr. Decastro, his moulting time was over, and he looked sleek and spruce all in new feathers. Mrs. Decastro had poked her nose, at least three

three times over, into every crack and corner of the castle, stared at the magnificent towers without, and the grand painted ceilings within, until her eyes ran with water. As soon as the newness of the old castle was a little rubbed off, Mrs. Decastro began to grow restless in the midst of grandeur. What is the good of a fine thing, if one cannot show it to another? She began to want sadly to see company again, for here was no soul but Old Crab and his wife and little Julia, her husband, the two boys, and young Genevieve. Poor woman! she was like to be moped to death! and what was worse, was afraid to own it, for her husband had plied her so closely with doses of adulation, that she was quite sick of her own virtues. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, as Queen Elizabeth said of a ——. Mrs. Decastro had been blown into such high latitudes by her husband's praises, that she could have

been

been glad at times to have got safe back again with all her heart: she found it very troublesome to be very good and very excellent, and to be made a goddess; it put such a restraint upon her, that she was forced to be better than she used to be, at times, to save her credit, though she was willing to make her husband's words good, at as little expense as possible. She was ashamed to say she was dull at Oaken Grove, or show any discontent, because such a sensible woman as she was, forsooth, had too many resources in herself to stand in any need of those toys, playthings, and fiddle-faddles, that took up the time and attention of women of inferior minds—she would not have gone to a ball, if she had come within hearing of the fiddles; not she—no—she was put far above all such giddy childish trifles; she was made too wise to regard these things, —she was not as other women were; she had put her sex under her feet;

she

she had too much vanity not to be very good, too much pride not to be a piece of excellence. Now she could have been very glad to have got all these fine things for nothing, but the pity of it is that the finer every thing is the more it unluckily costs us. Mrs. Decastro could have been glad enough to have stood above others, and kept the precedence which her husband gave her, but she did not, and for this reason, viz. because she could not. Some good, however, came of those evil means which Old Crab condemned, she took it into her head to come to church to shore up the reputation of being both wise and good, since the wisest and best people of all ages have ever been the most religious.—But we have forgot the boys again!—Mr. Decastro was got at his old work one day, making his wife some fine compliments when, having had tickling enough to serve for once, she put a finger into one of her husband's button-

ton-holes, and, hooking him to her, spoke as follows: "My dear, your brother Bat said in his sermon last Sunday, that it was very wicked to have store of good things and keep all to ourselves. This was certainly intended as a hint to us who have store of good things and keep all to ourselves. Now in regard to the pleasures and amusements of the giddy and the loose, you very well know how much I am above them, and how little I set by them, but charity forbids that we should have much and none be the better for so your brother Bat held forth in the pulpit. We have magnificent rooms but nobody comes into them. We have cellars full of fine wines, but nobody comes to taste a glass. We have a grand park full of fine deer, but nobody comes to eat a bit of venison. We have a train of fine footmen that are paid to view their persons in the looking-glasses. We have a butler and an

under-butler that have nothing to do but suck one another's thumbs: things standing in this posture what are we doing but wasting those things which others would be happy to partake in the enjoyment of? What is Avarice but the worst sort of waste? What is griping all to oneself but avarice? What is charity but a distribution? What is generosity but calling our friends about us, and tasting the good things which heaven has given us together? What is charity but a duty? What generosity but a virtue? If I am to live in the middle of a great wood here, I must beg to make a few conditions." "Name them," quoth Mr. Decastro. "A few friends," quoth she—"Granted," quoth he. "That the boys be bred in the world," quoth she—"Hum," quoth he. "The boys are young at present, but when birds-nesting time is over with them what can they find to do in a wood?—If I am invited to a friend's house, though it

it be in London, I must have leave of absence for two or three months in a year." "Granted," quoth he. "Four horses to my carriage." "Granted," quoth he. "Be allowed the same for pin-money as usual." "Granted," quoth he. "Well, but the boys," quoth she. "What of the boys?" quoth he. "Send them to a public school," quoth she. "Send them to the devil," quoth he. "The devil will find them out in private, as well as in public," quoth she. "Hum," quoth he, and "Hah!" quoth Old Crab, who had just come into the room unobserved, "you have set up your wife for an idol, so come down upon your knees and worship her, you great blockhead!" "You will run all risks of my taking your advice?" said Mr. Decastro to his wife. "I will," quoth she—"all the merit of the thing, if it turn out well being mine." "And all the blame," quoth he, "if the thing turn out ill, being your's also?" "Well," quoth she, "but whose fault

is

is it to be, if you are no judge, if my advice should be taken?" "If the thing turn out well," quoth he, "you will have all the merit of the advice; but, if ill, am I to have all the blame for acting upon it?" "Come," quoth she, "we had best leave no stones to break windows, we will share and share alike." "But," quoth he, "you will not blame me if the thing turn out ill, because I took your advice?" "Neither," quoth she, "if it turns out well shall you carry all the merit—at all events the merit of the advice will be mine." "It needs must," quoth he, "as well as the blame, if matters come wrong, be your's also. Look you, my dear, I have a right of choice to do as I please, you know, you must needs lay that down: well, you give advice—I take it or refuse it as I will—if I take it and it falls out ill, you have the blame of the ill advice, and I the blame for taking it. If I take it and it falls out well, I have the merit of taking it; and

and you the merit of the good advice." "Come," quoth she, "I'll risk my share, take it." Mr. Decastro did so, and soon afterwards ordered his carriage and wheeled off his seed to Eton College.

CHAPTER X.

Some Account of John Mathers, otherwise called Old Comical.

Reader!—your memory is better than ours—hath not the name of John Mathers, alias Old Comical, already been seen in this our history? To ask a question is not to affirm a thing—if we were to say it had when it had not, Horace's *Dormitat* may bring off old Homer, who may take a nap without getting his bones broken, when all the Horaces in the world would not save ours from being knocked into splinters. 'Tis no matter, let be, if it has not it shall and will be, and that's enough; for we hate the plague and trouble of looking back into what we have written, a plague and trouble which some would be glad to suffer if they could catch us napping, as Horace says. But we shall go to sleep, now and then, for

for all that, so let people make their best of it; and if we put you to sleep, reader, folks must take a little refreshment on their journey as well through a book as through the world. But who is John Mathers?—the son of 'Squire Mathers, Lord of the Manor of Cock-a-doodle of Cock-a-doodle Hall, Northamptonshire, Justice of the Peace, one of the Quorum, and Custos Rotulorum. The students of the University of Gottingen, for there was he bred, gave him the name of Old Comical, a merry seed was he,—when comes there such another? His father was a pretty gentleman of the place and county aforesaid, with money in his pockets, and dirt to his boots, it might be some three or four thousand pounds per annum: he would laugh, heaven rest his merry soul and forgive it its sins, for it was a vice he had, aye, he would laugh—it would do a man's heart good to hear him. He fell into a fit of laughter one day, and laughed

till

till he was ready to die; and, taking it into his head that a man could not die at a pleasanter moment, he laughed as long as he lived, which might be five minutes; and when the old women laid out his body they all fell a laughing, for death had left his laugh upon his face as fresh as if the joke had been that moment cracked. Hearing of his father's death, Old Comical came home to have an eye to his father's will, if any might be, and see how he stood for bread and butter. Now there was put over Old Comical's nose a thing called an Elder Brother. whom he found in full feather at Cock-a-doodle-Hall, heir at law to all his father's property, and his nose above the stars. Was there no will?—none: at least so his brother told him; and as for lies there never had been. one told in the family. A lie is one of the handiest things that was ever invented, it was a wonder, wasn't it, that they never found out its sundry and manifold

uses

uses in this family? A lie brings many an honest man into house and land, who might have dined upon a hedge-hog, and gone to bed in a ditch and told the truth—starved all the flesh off his bones and turned them into a multiplication table, like old Napier, the renowned mathematician. "What," quoth Old Comical, "has my father left me nothing?" "Not a penny," quoth the young esquire. "'Sume my body," quoth Old Comical, "what have I done to be sent empty away?" "A man might ask that question and not get another to answer him," quoth the young esquire. Old Comical found it to be a waste of good breath to talk to a man who had run into the world before him and won the sweepstakes, so, finding that the very dirt on his shoes was not his own, and that he were like to stand upon other people's ground, was willing to be at least as merry upon it as the owner, so he sat down under a hedge

and wrote a song, and, begging a bit of board of a carpenter, being asked to pay for it he put three legs in it, and, mounting the stool, sung the carpenter his ballad. The carpenter was very well satisfied with the song, and suffered Old Comical to depart in peace; who went into the next town, and eating a good dinner, and drinking thereafter a pot of the best ale, fell fast asleep at an alehouse fire-side: it growing late the landlord gave Old Comical a push and told him it was time to pay his reckoning and be going; whereupon Old Comical mounted his stool, and, pulling out his ballad, sung the same in the ear of the landlord. As soon as the landlord had done laughing, for it was a very merry song, he again pointed to the chalk upon the door, and again demanded his money; upon which Old Comical rose upon his stool a second time, and sung his song over again, and made such a din,

and

and raised such peals of laughter, for the neighbours, hearing a merry sound, were gathered round the door, that the landlord's voice was drowned in music and merriment. At length, finding that he were like to get nothing but music for his good cheer, he set his foot upon that side of Old Comical that comes after all his other sides, and bade him get along for a pleasant rascal: so he took his stool under his arm and went into a lodging-house, and having ordered a good bed, got into it and slept very well. On the morrow the mistress of the house told him, with a gentle rap at the door, it was time to get up; whereupon up rose Old Comical, and put on his clothes, and coming down stairs payment was demanded for his night's lodging: upon which Old Comical asked the landlady if she loved music? Yes, she loved music very well, she said, but what was that to the purpose?—she begged he would pay and begone. "All the bet-

ter," quoth he, pulling out his ballad, and stepping up on his stool. She stared—" It is all the better, I say," quoth Old Comical, with a preliminary flourish, " it is all the better;" and forthwith Old Comical sang his ballad three times over. The landlady, smelling out the trick, for still as she dunned Old Comical sung, sent one for the constable, who was not silent on the way, and soon brought back, not only the constable, but a hundred people along with him as good fun would have it, and they surrounded the door of the lodging-house, and saw Old Comical mounted on his stool with his ballad in one hand and his hat and wig in the other. Seeing company were come, Old Comical began again, and the people, gathering the story presently, called aloud for silence and then for the ballad; thereupon Old Comical broke out with greater rapture; the landlady scolded, Old Comical sung, and the folks laughed, and

and they made a great noise all together. Now it so befel at this time that the justice of the peace rode that way, and hearing a noise, and seeing the constable with his staff in the midst of the people, he was fain to hear the news—one telling his worship the story, the justice, casting his eye upon Old Comical mounted on his stool, as aforesaid, gave his countenance to the riot, and fell a laughing with the rest: and no wonder, for the very sight of Old Comical would make any man laugh: his face was as red as fire, upon which half a dozen warts, as big as red gooseberries, and much of the same colour, had disposed themselves at certain distances from one another, the largest of which sat upon the roof of his nose: he had another on his chin hanging thereat by a slender stalk, like the little fruit aforesaid: he had another on his forehead, which was never seen but when he laughed, for at that time his features were all drawn

 together

together in the middle of his face, and the said wart came down from under his wig in a very odd manner: his nose was irregular, turned up at the point, and hitched up on one side, and the wings thereof very wide. He was so deeply marked by the small-pox that his face looked like a red honey-comb, so deeply pitted that a towel was of little use to him; and, being a neat man, he used to clean his face with a brush, which very much increased his natural floridity. Old Comical was as bald as a doll, and his pate was seamed and lined all over like a map of the roads: his eyes were dark blue, clear as crystal and very fine, one of which he almost always kept shut, like one taking aim, so he passed with many for a man of one eye, till he convinced them of their mistake by a sudden stare which had such oddity in it as made people laugh; he had a very wide mouth, and throat, so that when he laughed one might almost see what

he

he had in his stomach; he had a very fine set of teeth, which he showed all at one grin: the retractive muscles of the upper lip gave him astonishing powers of grimace, and though his mouth was very wide, and his lips very protuberant, such was the force of the sphincter oris, that he could gather them up into a little wrinkle, which he usually did before he broke out into a loud laugh: he had five or six different voices, which he used each as occasion served, and two or three of them were such odd noises, that no man could hear them without laughing: he sung an excellent song, and when he pleased his voice was as clear as a bell: nature made him on purpose for a droll, and he had such a variety of humour that one never grew tired of him. As soon as he had finished his ballad, which he had been made to sing several times over, the justice bade the constable bring him out, and began to remonstrate with him for singing

such

such a nasty song. "You must be come to a sad pitch of impudence to sing such a nasty song before all these people," said the justice, "and I have a mind to put you into the stocks for it." "Sir," said Old Comical, "I don't see what harm there can be in nastiness when it sets folks a laughing; a man's sand runs merrily, an it please your worship, when we put him into his teh-heh's and ha ha's—these are precious moments—put a man into the stocks for making folks merry!—see what comes of doing the world a good turn!" "You rascal," quoth the justice, "you may do the world a good turn without turning its stomach, and I have a mind to have you whipped; your dirty song is an offence to decency and good manners." "The world's stomach is not so soon turned," quoth Old Comical, "it is no such squeamish matter, it were as good as forty shillings if I could set the world a vomiting and bring the devil up, the devil

devil is in its bowels and sets it a hankering after forbidden fruits: it were a special good emetic, and it like your worship, that cast out old Satan! Has not your worship enough to do to see the pots of ale well filled, that the bread be heavy enough, the cheese well weighed out, all the bastards paid for, and that no cruel grocer circumcise a pat of butter? Nastiness indeed! let nasty words alone—they are but as the wind that blows—and look to nastier deeds: the nicer folks' ears the nastier their fingers! Look to dirty hands, old Quorum, look to dirty hands—you must be come to a fine pass if a beggar's ballad be the greatest nuisance in your parish! a man may go a long way before he can sing a song in such another!" Upon which Old Comical began to quaver, as if he would sing again. The justice, though he could not help laughing, threatened to put him into the stocks; upon which Old Comical said, "Put them into the

stocks that give me encouragement, they are the most to blame: why don't you teach your people better things than to be pleased with a poor ballad-singer? If they do wrong it is your fault who stand over the hundred with the cat-o'-nine-tails in your hand—lay it on where it is wanted, or be stripped at the whipping-post for not doing your duty: flog me the last, and where will you find a rod? when all have enough let me come in for the scraps. If all are whipped that should be let me sell whipcord." Upon which some present cried out that Old Comical had put the justice down, and the people pressed on all sides to buy his ballad, of which he had copies ready in his pocket: and it had a good sale, but the more he sold the more he raised the price, for, being asked, he said the scarcer things grew the dearer they came, and he sold his last ballad for sixpence: and now, having sold all he had save one, he put his stool under

his

his arm, and forthwith put himself upon his journey, when the landlady caught Old Comical by the skirt, and told him she would be paid for his bed. "What d'ye charge for your bed?" quoth he. "A shilling," quoth she. "That's not enough," quoth he. "Not enough!" quoth she. "We'll say eighteen-pence then." "Eighteen-pence!" quoth he; "why, I should have expected to pay eighteen-pence if I had slept on a cow's-hide." "Come," quoth she, "I'll be content with two shillings, pay and begone." "Two shillings!" quoth he, "what for a night's lodging in such a house as your's!—why, I should be charged at least half-a-crown, near London, if I slept in a fish-kettle: folks in the country don't know what to ask for their things and that's the reason they are all so poor. I can make due allowance for the ignorance of country-people, but if any had asked a man of my rank in London less than five shillings for my

night's lodging, I should have taken it as an affront to my person and appurtenances.—A shilling for my bed! pray, good woman, whom do you take me for? d'ye think I came into your house to be insulted? I must tell you that I was born at Cock-a-doodle in Northamptonshire, and have a brother now living who is not only a very great man, but what is more, is a justice of the peace, high sheriff for the county, and lord of the manor of Cock-a-doodle!" Upon which Old Comical shook his tail, and marched off in great wrath, without paying a farthing. The next town he came to he went into a taylor's shop and was measured for a full suit of clothes, all of the finest cloth, and gave orders that the waistcoat should have a broad gold lace put on it; and then he bespoke a new pair of boots at a shoe-maker's, and ordered the men to work immediately. When dressed, he walked into an inn and bespoke breakfast, dinner, supper, and a bed.

a bed." The landlord cast his eye upon the gold lace on Old Comical's waist-coat, and made a low bow. The next morning the waiter brought the bill. "What's that?" quoth Old Comical. "It is your bill, sir." "How dare you bring me a bill, you scoundrel?" quoth he. "I beg your honour's pardon," quoth the waiter, "it was my master's order that I should." "O ho!" quoth Old Comical, "was it so?— send your master to me this moment." In came the landlord. "Was it by your order that I have a bill brought in?" quoth he. "I heard your honour was going, and it is usual to be paid before people leave my house." "Waiter! go this moment for a constable; I'll make your master know who is at home, I'll warrant him!" Upon this the landlord looked like one at his wit's ends. The moment the constable made his appearance, and cast his eyes upon Old Comical's waistcoat, he felt great awe, and humbly begged to know

what

what was the matter? "Matter!" quoth he, "have you brought some stout fellows along with you?" "Yes, an please your honour, half a dozen are at the door, for we have always a disturbance at the Bull, I think." Now in came the shoe-maker, and in came the tailor, each man with his bill upon Old Comical, who began to make such a noise, that none could be heard to speak but himself; he charged the landlord, and the tailor, and the shoemaker, with some dreadful crime each, which he should make appear in another place, and bade the constable do his duty, and take care to have the rascals forthcoming. Upon which the six fellows aforesaid rushed in with the constable at their head, and seized the landlord, the tailor, and the shoemaker, and away they hauled them, say what they could, and in a terrible fright at their being taken into custody: upon which Old Comical marched in the rear, and having seen

all

all put under lock and key, he walked quietly out of the town without let or molestation. As soon as he got clear of the place, he untied his bundle and put on his old clothes, turned his wig, which had been well powdered, (gratis,) inside out, took his stool under his arm and his ballad in his hand, and, being presently overtaken by some, who pursued him, he mounted his stool and sung them his ballad. Being much entertained therewithal they were fain to hear the song again, and when they had done laughing, inquired if he had seen a gentleman dressed in blue and gold? "This moment mounted his coach and four," quoth he, "and gone off, on a full gallop, to the right," shewing them a road that branched off on that hand: upon this they put spurs to their horses and were out of sight in a moment. Old Comical followed them as the safest way, and coming to a gentleman's house changed his clothes, rang

at

at the gate, and asked if the master were at home? The servant said that he was not. "What's become of him?" quoth Old Comical. "He was sent for by the landlord of the Bull, at the next town, to stand his friend in a troublesome matter." "O!" quoth he, "that's the very business I am come upon; I am an old friend of your master's; lay a cloth upon a table in any room at hand, and bring in what cold meat you have, for I can't wait while any be dressed; I have papers on this and other business for your master, who will return, perhaps, in an hour." He not returning, Old Comical, as soon as he had eat a good dinner and drank what he pleased, told the servant he could then stay no longer, but ordered some paper and wrote a note to the master of the house as follows:

SIR,

A FRIEND has called at your house to

to say, that the oldest relation you have in the world is dead: make what use of this intelligence you may think most for your own interest.

A FRIEND.

As soon as the master of the house returned, he received the note from the servant who had orders to give it, and getting into a postchaise with four horses, set off full speed the Lord knows whither. Old Comical, who lay by and saw him go off, came back again into the house and told the servant he was invited to a bed there by his master, whom he met on the road; and here Old Comical staid two days, and was very hospitably entertained by the lady of the house, who told him he had done her and her husband, some how or other, a very great service: whereupon Old Comical waxed exceeding merry, sung his ballad to the lady and her two daughters, who were young ladies of great elegance and delicacy, ate and drank of the

best, and slept on a bed that was fit for a king. The day after Old Comical came into the house he sounded the lady upon her husband's return, and, feeling his ground, knew how long he could stay in it. On the morning of his departure, he was very much pressed to give the lady and her two daughters a little more of his company, for they had laughed day and night, both asleep and awake, as long as Old Comical had taken up his abode with them, but he made his excuses and thanks, and took his leave; whereupon one of the young ladies, who had fallen in love with him, wept bitterly. Having walked a dozen miles, he met a postchaise coming on full speed with four horses, he stopt it, and asked a gentleman who was riding in it if the chaise had been taken at the last town? The gentleman said he had hired it at the last town. Upon which Old Comical begged the gentleman, if he had not had the small-pox, to get out that moment, for he

knew

knew the chaise, that very chaise, to have conveyed a patient in the last stage of the distemper to an hospital. The gentleman, who, as it happened, had not had the small-pox, jumped out of the chaise in a moment, and fell to spitting and blowing his nose, and thanking Old Comical, who helped him out with the luggage, put his own in its place, and bidding the drivers make the best of their way home, jumped into the chaise and rode away like a prince, leaving the gentleman and his portmanteau to pursue their journey on foot. He had not gone far before a butcher outrode the chaise with a buttock of beef on his tray before him. "Hoi!" quoth Old Comical, "I am going there, and will take your beef for you, it will save you a little trouble." The butcher, knowing the post-chaise and the drivers very well, put his buttock in at the window. "Drive on," quoth Old Comical; and away he went with a piece of beef that weighed five stone on the steelyards.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

In Continuation.

UPON seeing a town at some little distance, Old Comical called to the drivers to stop, with great prudence, at the corner of a wood, who, by the familiar manner in which he had addressed him, concluded that he was an old acquaintance of the gentleman, whose place he had taken in the post-chaise, and whom they knew very well to be the master of the house whereat Old Comical had been so kindly received by the lady and her two daughters: they waited therefore with great patience for the return of Old Comical out of the wood, conceiving some little necessity had called him aside. The town clock presently struck, which is a thing that puts a man as much in mind of time as any other; so Tom said to Dick, "Shall we call to the gentleman?" "No, no," said Dick to Tom, "we had best not disturb him, though

though he stays longer than I expected:" their patience, however, getting upon the ebb, one dismounted, and going to the wood side, called out, "Are you a coming, sir?" Upon getting no answer, Tom said to Dick, "Go into the wood, the gentleman may have met with an accident, and be dead, for any thing we know." As soon as Dick had searched as long as he thought good, he came out of the wood just as wise as he went into it, and looking into the chaise, said, "Why, Tom, the gentleman has taken out his luggage!"—This had not been observed; for the drivers, supposing he got out for some little matter, did not look behind them for good manners, when Old Comical made his escape into the wood; and there being a gate and a path, they supposed also that he might be within a short walk of the house which he was engaged at, so they e'en drove the chaise (which had been paid for) to their inn without

giving

giving themselves any further trouble. As soon as Old Comical had proceeded into the thickest part of the wood, he left the path, and getting into a brake of holly bushes, changed his clothes, wisely judging that the less show he made at present the better, and that a man dressed in a suit of blue and gold with a buttock of beef at his back might make folks take more notice of him than made for his interest; for though his cloth was large, what with his clothes, his stool, and the beef, the meat he found must needs be seen at one corner or another. So having bestowed all matters with much wisdom, and cut a strong stick out of the wood, he thrust one end of it through a knot in his handkerchief, and away he trudged with his meat and his clothes on his shoulder. He grew hungry, which is apt to come of long fasting, and spying a gang of gypsies sitting round a great pot, he made a bargain with them, and got his beef well boiled

boiled for nothing; for as soon as it was done, he told them a story which frightened them out of their wits, and they ran away and left their fire, and their pot, and Old Comical to shift for themselves. Having cleared his ground, he laid hands upon half a loaf of bread which, as the gypsies had left, might be well supposed to be of no further use to them, and taking a good slice of beef ate a good dinner. He then arose, and packing up the residue of his meat, walked on, when the path on which he was, forming a sort of half circle, brought him into the very road which he had lately quitted: finding this, he made a full stop, and wisely judging it to be a little of the dangerous, having, by some late exploits, made it the road to fame, he tacked about and changed it for another, being minded to make the best of his way to London, thinking it not unlikely, no honesty standing in the way, that he might come to riches and honours in that celebrated

city.

city. It now grew towards sun-set, and having lain in lavender of late, he thought a bed as good as a dry ditch to pass the night in: but as he had quite as lief get a good bed for nothing as pay for a night's lodging, he stopt at the door of a parsonage-house, having changed his clothes and hid his wallet in a hedge. Upon the parson coming, to answer the knock at his door, as soon as he saw the gold lace on Old Comical's waistcoat, took a step back out of respect, as who should say, "I know my distance"—"Mr. Terry," quoth Old Comical, having got his name from one on the road, for he seldom let a man pass without getting something out of him, "I have, here, a letter, which a friend of mine requested me to leave at your house, if I found you not at home; if I found you there, to deliver it safely into your own hands; and, if it required an answer, to wait for the same, and be the bearer thereof." "My name," quoth

the parson, "certainly is Terry, and the letter (which Old Comical, having picked up some intelligence from a clown, had written) is directed to me:" upon which the parson opened it, and, with no little astonishment, read as follows:

"Sir,

"The late vicar, to whose living you have been lately presented, and whom you lately buried, with what conscience must be left to you, was put into his grave before he was dead, and the body, luckily for him, being stolen, it came to its senses under a surgeon's dissecting knife upon receiving a gash in the abdomen: the poor man, though at present in a very weak state, is daily recovering at the house of a friend, and will, as soon as well, claim his living at your hands; now as this affair will undergo a strict investigation, as he was supposed to die in your house, and you had been promised the next presentation, I have made a friend the bearer of this letter, who, for some

reasons, must withhold my name, in order to give you an opportunity to collect matter for your defence in this extraordinary case; as the vicar will swear that he heard you say, after he was nailed down, though totally deprived of speech and motion, that if he were not quite dead it would not be long before he were, and that was all one, as he was given over by his physicians, and so he was handed into his grave. Now, sir, the bearer of this letter, being himself the very surgeon who gave the body the slash in the belly, by way of preface to his lecture in anatomy, and under whose hands the corpse again became a vicar, will save me any further trouble, and satisfy you in all matters on which you please to question him.

I am, sir, your
ANONYMOUS FRIEND.

This dreadful letter, as well it might, turned the poor parson into stone. Recovering,

covering, he fixed his eyes on Old Comical, and asked him if all were true? Upon which he said he had a long story to tell, and begged to sit down. The parson hoped his amazement might excuse his incivility in keeping a gentleman of his appearance standing at the door, very courteously showed him into a room and offered him a chair: upon which Old Comical began a story which lasted three hours and twenty minutes, and great part thereof was told in the dark, for night fell an hour at least before the story was ended, and so fixed was the parson's attention, that, until one called him to supper, he scarcely knew where he was. As they walked into the supper-room, "All this," quoth the parson, "is very strange and very shocking; but, sir, I have a great many questions to put upon this dreadful matter, and must beg for your stay here until I am satisfied in all points." "I will sup with you, and take a bed, if you please,"

 quoth

quoth Old Comical—" Nay, I am determined to eat, drink, and sleep with you as long as you have a question to ask:" so the parson, his wife, and Old Comical sat down to a couple of boiled fowls and oyster sauce. Now the parson's wife, who had catched the lucky moment to hear the letter read by her husband, felt as if she should burst before she could get to the nearest house in the village to tell the news, and the first to hear it was the late vicar's wife, who had just married her footman. This lady, upon hearing that her former husband was come to life again, fell into a fit to the no small disturbance of her family. Betty Elbowgrease, maid-servant in the house, who had as good a knack at listening as the parson's wife for her heart, and quite as eager to tell any news, ran out into the village and told the story to all she met, with additions: and away went the news, aye, on the wings of the wind, and put the whole neighbourhood

bourhood into a flux from one end to the other! Mrs. Kicksey told it to Mrs. Wicksey, and Mrs. Wicksey told it to Mrs. Cock, and Mrs. Cock told it to Mrs. Jimcrack, and Mrs. Jimcrack told it to Mrs. Jiggumbob, and Mrs. Jiggumbob told it to Mrs. Shufflebottom, and Mrs. Shufflebottom told it to Mrs. Blueknuckle, and Mrs. Blueknuckle told it to Mrs. Devilsgizzard and her seven daughters, and every one added something to the story. The old women ran into knots in the street, and took a great deal of snuff upon it the next morning. The baker carried the story out with his bread, and the butcher carried it out with his meat, the brewer with his beer, and the barber with his soap and razors, and cut a great slice out of the squire's chin in the heat of the story. Colds, fevers, and agues, were caught by many, who ran out of their houses without their hats, cloaks, bonnets and great coats, in the rain, to spread the

news: Mrs. Qualm came at seven months, Mrs. Scramblebottom miscarried of twins, Mrs. Thimbletail came with a still-born child, and Mrs. Crincumcrankum was brought to bed in her larder, all alarmed at the story! Old Comical ate a hearty supper and slept well in the best bed at the vicarage. He arose the next morning as blyth as a lark and ate fifteen muffins and drank one-and-twenty dishes of tea for his breakfast. "Sir," said the parson, "I am as innocent of all laid to my charge as the babe unborn, and had sooner been intombed myself than buried any man alive. The late vicar, who was my uncle, certainly died in my house, in which every attention was shown, and every care taken of him that could be, and I am sure, for my own particular," quoth the parson, with tears, "I loved him as if he had been my father. He was the best friend I ever had in the world, and I had sooner died myself than have

have lost one whom I had so much regard for." Old Comical, who was as silent at breakfast as he had been at supper, took care that no idle conversation should engage him at times of such importance, wisely judging that when his belly was full, his mouth would be empty, and might talk when it had nothing better to do. "Mr. Terry," said he, when he had eat till he was tired, "I am your very humble servant and all that: which is as much as to say that I should be happy to serve you in any matter which might tend to clear up your character in this affair: but I would have you to understand that I am not the man who bought your uncle's body, though I confess I gave him the aforesaid cut in the belly: it was the gentleman who wrote the letter that purchased the corpse, and falling ill, begged it of me as a friend, to read a few lectures for him during his indisposition, that his students in anatomy

might feel no loss in his absence." At that moment, casting his eye into the church-yard, for the vicarage-house stood in one corner of it, he saw some with spades and pickaxes come into it, and, making a stand close by a handsome tombstone, dispatch one, who came out to be the clerk of the parish, to the parsonage-house, upon which Old Comical, who always had his wits about him, suspected the truth, that the story had got into the wind, and folks were come to open the grave. The clerk now came in and told the parson that he was come by the squire's orders to get permission to break open Dr. Crambelly's tomb, as a report prevailed that the body had been stolen, and the squire being a near relation, begged the grave might be examined immediately both to satisfy himself and the neighbourhood. The words were hardly spoken before the squire himself came in, and swore terribly to what he would do if the author of the lie,

lie, should it so fall out, could be come at. The parson put Old Comical's letter into the squire's hand, who read it and raved like a madman. Others now flocked to the parson's house, and there were as many as a church could hold in five minutes, aye, and there was a great noise; but Old Comical's voice drowned all the rest, who exclaimed, that the grave had best be examined to satisfy the people. The church-yard by this time was as full as if it were the last Sunday on earth, and Old Comical sallied forth amongst the rest to examine Dr. Crambelly's grave: and to work they fell, some with pick-axes, and some with spades, and soon routed the poor doctor out of his sepulchre. It hath been wisely observed that when people's attention is deeply engaged in any matter, a man may steal any thing: now Old Comical was aware of this, and stole a march: and in good time, for the enraged squire unkennelled a pack with the

 constable

constable in place of huntsman, and they beat seven parishes to find Old Comical, but all in vain: for he went directly to the hedge where he had left his wallet, and getting into a high road mounted the first stage-coach, and scoured away like dust before the wind. "How far are you going?" quoth the coachman; "as far as you can drive me," quoth Old Comical: and sometimes singing, sometimes telling stories, and sometimes making faces, Old Comical raised a monstrous uproar upon the roof of the coach. Coming to the inn at night whereat the coach put up, Old Comical ordered a supper and a bed, and giving directions for a hot pot of rambooze, "Landlord," said he, "pay the coachman his fare, and give the poor fellow half-a-crown for himself;" whereupon he unbuttoned his coat, and showed his gold laced waistcoat, which had already done great execution. It was concluded that a man who had so much

gold

gold upon his clothes must needs have a great deal more in his pocket, which, like redundance of humours, when there are more than the body can conceal, break out upon the surface: so the landlord went into the kitchen, talked about Old Comical's gold, and paid the coachman his fare, and rattling down a half-crown piece upon the dresser, "You see what noble guests I entertain, coachman," quoth the landlord, "that's for yourself!"—At this inn, which was a very good one, Old Comical staid a fortnight, ate, drank, and slept like a man in good health; and attracted so many by his oddities, that the landlord would have been glad to have hung Old Comical up for his sign, for he never drew so much liquor in his life; but he soon found out that hanging was too good for him, for he took a walk one day before he paid his bill. Old Comical now lay under manifold obligations to gentlemen in sundry parts of Great

 Britain,

Britain, and began to be overwhelmed with gratitude for so many favours and kindnesses, but, however it fell out, he was in no great hurry to return to any to thank them for their good things. When he left his brother's house in Northamptonshire his drift lay southward, and he had in the course of about a year and a half very much amused almost all the inhabitants of the south and southwestern parts of the island. He began now to be much talked of, and much sought after, in the county of Dorset especially, where his fame had risen like the sun upon the earth; and, like that great luminary, Old Comical had drawn a great deal out of it without paying any thing for it: but here the comparison breaks, for instead of holding his own, and shining on with undiminished brightness, Old Comical began to grow tarnished, and had lost three parts out of four of the gold lace from his waistcoat, and as much respect along with it; so that

the very garment that used to carry him with such honours into an inn, could scarcely, in such its decayed state, get him a piece of a bench at an alehouse. In a little time he grew as ragged as any beggar, and, if to be a less rogue is to be more honest, he was not now so great a rogue as when he wore better clothes, so rags in some sort brought honesty along with them, for there never was a great rogue without a fine coat upon his back. He now made the best of his way out of the south, and the more ragged he grew the more he was disguised, for it was a man in a gold laced waistcoat that robbed the people, and rags had no concern in the matter. We must now make the best of our way with him to Oaken Grove and leave him to recite at some future time many a piece of fun, and many a knavish trick, which we have not leisure at present to enumerate, and which will come in, perhaps, with more dignity in another place.

place. As people in decay run the farthest from those places wherein they shone the most in their better days, so Old Comical ran out of the south directly into the north, and after begging, ballad-singing, and stealing by turns he at length came to the ferry at Oaken Grove: and dangling the horn in his hands which hung on the post, not knowing well what to make of it, put it to his mouth at last, and blew it with all his might. The ferryman unchained his boat at the accustomed signal, and when he arrived at the opposite shore, called Old Comical an impudent scoundrel and asked who was to wait on him? Old Comical humbly begged pardon, and a penny, of the ferryman, and said, had he known the uses of the horn, he had sooner heard the devil blow it than he: the ferryman, struck with the oddity of Old Comical, gave him a penny, and forgave him his trouble, and Old Comical offering some ballads

to sale the ferryman bought sixpenny-worth of Old Comical's poetry. Upon which, "Is there any charity," quoth he, "to be found on the other side of the water?" The ferryman, who loved fun and drollery, upon this took Old Comical into his boat and landed him on the opposite shore; telling him that nobody lived in the old castle, but he would perhaps get a platter of broken meat at Mr. Decastro's, describing a farm-house situated on the left hand of it. Upon hearing the name of Decastro Old Comical called to mind his old friend and fellow-student at the University in Germany, but not much expecting to find him there, he mounted his stool at the door, and began to sing. Old Crab, who was then at dinner with his wife in his little parlour, hearing Old Comical's voice, turned his head, for he sat with his back to the window, and seeing a beggar upon a stool, began to scold his wife for encouraging a pack of ragged rascals at the

the farm. "I should be very sorry," quoth she, "to do any thing to displease you," when a trillo from Old Comical threw her into convulsions. It was quite impossible to hear old Old Comical sing two verses without laughing, and though Old Crab held it out much longer than his wife, as soon as Old Comical came to a fine shake, Old Crab burst out into a loud peal; and Old Comical, who saw how matters were, followed him up with another quaver, when Old Crab was fain to roar out, This is a pleasant scoundrel!—"Come," said Mrs. B. Decastro, "I think he deserves some broken victuals," and knowing the usual cast of Old Crab's countenance when he would assent to a thing, she poured some broken victuals and sixpence, by way of sauce to them, into Old Comical's wallet; whereupon poor Old Comical, who had not eat a morsel that day, sat down upon a stone at the door, and it did Old Crab's heart good, and his wife's too, to see how

heartily

heartily he ate his breakfast. Old Crab was now going forth to his business on his farm, when staring at Old Comical as he sat at meat, knew his face in an instant, for it was not very possible for any, who had once seen Old Comical's countenance ever to forget it: and Old Comical as soon discovered the face of his old fellow-student: each stared at the other like a post, and for a very good reason because a post has no eyes. "What, Mathers!" quoth Old Crab, "where the plague dost thou come from?" "Hold hard," quoth Old Comical, "and I'll tell you." He then gave a brief account of himself, and his wretched situation, which did not fail to make an impression upon such a heart as Old Crab's, who took Old Comical by the collar and hauled him into his house in such a rough manner that if it had happened a little more to the southward Old Comical would not have been much at a loss to guess at some reason

reason for it. As soon as Old Crab had brought him into a little chamber he showed him some old clothes, and bade dress himself as well as he could, out of the best he could find, and stay till he returned in the evening: this he did, and when Old Crab came home at night, he found Old Comical fast asleep by his kitchen fire, with his head upon his stool and a great volume of ballads for his pillow. It now only remains to be said in this place, that ever since that day Old Comical has lived with Old Crab, who, after a due course of instruction, made him his bailiff, and a bailiff of greater honesty and integrity never existed than Old Comical, as what remains to be said of him will show.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. and Mrs. Decastro's Folly, and a Masquerade.

WHAT! no love yet? I haven't patience! ten long chapters and not so much as one tender kiss! a kiss! there has not been so much as the breath squeezed out of a woman's body! Fair reader, what can we do for you? Julia and Genevieve are really too young to be kissed yet, and Lady Charlotte Orby, the third pretty woman hinted at a few pages since, will not come into our history for some time, and she is only fourteen years old at this moment and would scarce know what to do with a kiss if she got one—all we can promise is that we will get over three or four years as fast as our history will permit us, and then you shall read with pleasure how "George caught Julia round her waist and kissed her;" or, "Acerbus squeezed

squeezed Genevieve till she hiccup'd;" or, "Harry hugged Charlotte till her eyes watered," and every page shall be all on fire with love: but just at present, fair reader, little Cupid has nothing to shoot at, so he may lie by and get his arrows sharpened at the grindstone and steal a new bow.—But, nota bene, pretty maid, if you happen to have a lover of your own, a plain sensible honest man, not as handsome as Apollo, nor as ugly as Thersites, not so bright a wit as Aristophanes, nor quite such a heavy log as Mævius, not so smart a beau as the son of Clinias, nor such a sloven as Poodapoop the Hottentot, but a good household sort of a gentleman, one, if you know how to chuse, that will make you a good husband; what if we should put your mouth out of taste for him, when we bring in such sweetmeats as George Grove, Acerbus Decastro, or Harry Lamsbroke, who will touch your palate with every thing that is exquisite in human nature?

Now

Now as a full and true account will be given of these three fine fellows, as it becometh honest and faithful historians to do, we will promise you, dear lady, when any of these dangerous folks are like to come upon the stage, to give you due and prudent notice thereof in the titles to the chapters, to put you upon your guard, when you may either read, or skip, the said chapters, as you may see fit, lest one of these young rascals should pop upon you on a sudden at some odd corner, and do you any mischief.

What in the world could ever bring people to imagine that Mr. and Mrs. Decastro had retired into the north and kept a pork and butter shop in a little village in Cumberland? But this was the only story that was believed after fifty others had been told and disregarded: it was said with confidence, propagated with diligence, and believed with assurance from the center to the circumference of Mr. Decastro's

castro's circle of acquaintance. The following letter from the Earl of Budemere to Old Crab will throw more light upon this matter.

To the Rev. Bartholomew Decastro.

My dear Sir and Brother,

I am not at all afraid of being thought to flatter you when I say, that if there is such a thing as an honest man in England, you are one; for to flatter a man is, as I take it, to tell a lie in his praise, but I beg leave to appeal to your conscience for the truth of what I say, and, if that comes over, I shall speak boldly, even if your praise lie in my way to speaking the truth: no soul on earth ever wanted the help of an honest man more than I do, and one, like you, who knows business. I have been so much plundered of late years by stewards, bailiffs, head fellows, and other cormorants of the like feather, that I am

am concerned to say my affairs are sick to death of them, and if some medicine is not speedily brought to the malady, I must either turn steward, and plunder others, or commence shopkeeper, and score against the world in my turn, as soon as my own score is paid; which, I am sorry to tell you in confidence, will I fear be no easy matter: but I have no head for business, nor ever had, and when I talk to my steward, the first thing he does is to puzzle me, as if he knew the readiest way to rid his hands of me, for I always send him away when I do not understand him. I sent for him this morning to audit an account of some timber, which I cut down to beautify the western side of my park, and admit a fine prospect—but in truth to pay a bill—he brought me the lengths and girths of the trees by my order—a hint I took from you—the fellow had the cunning to put me upon working the sum of one

of

of the sticks, just as if he knew my ignorance, and I sent him about his business, telling him, that he was paid to save me that trouble. You see, my dear brother, how I may be cheated here, and know nothing about the matter, and thus it is in many other things, for want of a competent knowledge of business. Inclosed I have sent you the account of this timber, which is set down at ten thousand pounds worth, with the girths and lengths of all the trees; you will much oblige me by looking it over for me. To come at once to the point—my affairs are embroiled, and I very much want your help; I am not so crippled as poor Decastro, but am a very lame dog notwithstanding: my late election played the devil with me, a man had better have set upon a three legged stool all his days, than bought his seat in a certain great house at the price it cost me.—We are coming this summer to visit the lakes, and see

other

other curiosities in your part of the world; Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair, and Mrs. Perrimont, will be of our party, pray get us some apartments in the next village to you for a few days, while I consult you upon my matters. My situation is unknown to the world, and I would keep it so; for none, except a few men of your turn, pay any respect to a person in distress. My late accession to new honours may have added a little to my name, but it has taken a great deal from my pocket; an addition to my title has added to my expenses, indeed, but not to my income. It is very much my wish, my dear brother, to make a friend of you, but I am sorry to see that you take pains to avoid me: the man that is the most wanted in a house like mine is sure to be the greatest stranger in it. I am my-lorded, and my-lorded, and my-lorded over by a pack of cheats, sycophants, parasites and plunderers, many of whom cannot even

rob me without being paid for their trouble. I will not scruple to say, that in my present situation I am really an object of your charity, and beg of you, not only by our relationship, but in the name of pity and compassion, that you would look into my affairs and tell me what ground I have left to stand upon.

Colonel Barret, who is come to be with us for a few days, has just told us a sad story of poor Decastro, and given but too good authority for the truth of it: the substance of which is, that when all his debts were paid he had nothing left to live upon, that you, out of charity, and at your own expense, have set him up in a little shop in some village near you, and that he and his wife get their bread by retailing snuff, tobacco, pork, and butter to the neighbourhood. Many stories have been told, but as none have come upon such good evidence as the above, we have opened a subscription for him, and names are

already put to the amount of three thousand pounds, which may be sunk in an annuity sufficient to supersede the necessity of our poor brother's keeping a dirty shop. Present our kind remembrances to him and his lady, and tell him we will call and ask him how he does when we come into your neighbourhood.

Old Crab's Answer to the Earl of Budemere's Letter.

Kinsman,

I have long expected to see you in the brambles, and your coat is like to get pretty well scratched, if you come off with a bit of cloth upon your back, as appears by your own story. Your timber is ill-sold and cast up two thousand pounds too little into the bargain, taking your steward's own account of it—how it hath been measured is another matter—but I have had trouble enough with John's affairs

—will the devil never leave the family? What the plague do you and your gang come staring here after? I have sent your letter to John, he may look for lodgings, I shall not trouble myself about such an idle crew; yawning and gaping about the country, as if ye had more money than a pack of fools knew what to do with. If you have got any thing to say to me, why don't you get into a stage-coach and come by yourself? I told you two years ago, when I met you in Bond-street, those two scoundrels, your stewards, were playing the devil with you, one within doors and the other without; but you were such an ass and a fool as to take no heed to what I said,—why didn't you let that election alone? What the devil could you have to do in it that had no money to squander away? Must you ruin yourself to bring such precious talents as yours, forsooth, to the service of the nation? Who could have put it into your stu-

pid brains, that you, who can't take care of your own matters, should be a fit person to take care of the public? Why the plague did not you set matters to rights in your own house before you came to set matters to rights in the House of Commons? What a sum this business cost you to get into it, when, if you had had a little patience, you might have got into the other house for nothing! Were you in such a hurry to get into Parliament to teach folks economy? To show people how to make things go the farthest by going the nearest way? A pretty maggot you were like to make in the cheese, if we set ourselves, with a vengeance, to eat one another out of house and home! You are a worse profligate than John; he never spent seventy thousand pounds at a cast in his life—your election cost you that, or they lied that told me the story. I avoid you! can you blame a man for getting out of the way of a nui-

 sance?

sance? a man that lives the life that you live is worse than a nuisance. I don't fall out with you because you are "MY LORD;" a man may be a good man under any name—I look not to the name, but to the man—the greater a man's name is the better if he be a good man, for great folks are the most stared at, are seen by the most people, and influence more by their example. A great man is a great torrent that sweeps much along with him, and if he be running on to destruction he takes half a world on his way to it. Folks stick to a great man like vermin, and if he falls, down comes he and all his vermin together. If a little man makes a false step it concerns few but himself; but when a great man stumbles ten thousand must needs stumble with him to be in the fashion. A great man is the sun of a system; let him remember that it is his business to shine and to enlighten those beneath him. But it is of no use to

talk to such a one as you, you will take your own way if you break your neck in it, and, if you must needs do mischief, the sooner the better. What's become of your wife's fortune? is it all spent? And, because my father thought it no easy matter to give you as much money as you deserved, you must e'en have half poor Peg's cash; is that all spent too? You turn out a pretty fellow to be trusted, and my father must quarrel with me for talking about securities when a man of so much trust and honour was coming into our family. What is become of the forty and five thousand pounds which you carried out of our house? is there enough left to buy your wife a pair of shoes? is there enough left to buy yourself a halter? I know to an hour when the last five thousand pounds were sold out of the stocks to pay that blood-hound St. Clair a Newmarket bet. I avoid you! who began? I would have put a guard upon

Jane's money, my father asked me if I took you for a scoundrel? He cursed, and you swore, and would as soon come near the devil as look at me for ten years together. You stirred the fire between my father and me, it might have gone out after a hasty flash, and got me disinherited. How came I to find this out? I found the whole correspondence between you and my father amongst John's papers. This was revenge enough, or you must have had a savage's appetite for it. But it is no matter. You had at least the credit to think it were impossible I should find this out; but now it seems you have a mind to put me in a way to return an obligation: you have got hold of the wrong man for that. Send your stewards to me and I will see what can best be done for you.

Yours,

BARTHOLOMEW DECASTRO.

Oaken-Grove Farm,
May 30th.

In answer to this came a letter of confession, and, to do Lord Budemere justice, of sorrow too, for this malicious act. It is very odd that a man should look like a fool when he is detected in doing a wrong thing: but the next time Old Crab and Lord Budemere met one another the latter gentleman certainly looked very silly: but that his lordship may not look silly in print also we will not insert his letter: but to express one's sorrow, and make what amends one can for a fault, is the only way to put off a silly face and put on a wise one. *Sed de his hactenus.*

But the pork and butter shop raised a loud laugh at the castle, and it might have been as well if matters had ended there, but Mr. and Mrs. Decastro had a mind to make themselves a little more merriment upon it while their hand was in, though there was more malice mixed with their merriment than made for their credit: how far

provocation may go towards an excuse for them, the reader will judge, to whom we submit the following letter

To Mrs. Decastro.

My dear Sister,

I have written two letters to you, one of which I sent to Paris, and the other to Rome, at both which places you have been said to be, but having received no answer to either, I am willing to try once more to find you by sending a letter to my brother for you, in whose neighbourhood we have been told you are, and where we rather think you are, because my lord mentioned the thing in a letter to my brother Bat, and, though he does not say that you are, he certainly does not deny it in his answer to my lord, which we think he certainly would have done had the thing not been really so, very well knowing his way in such matters, for he not only will not deceive one

himself

himself but will not let another deceive one if he can help it—I therefore set down Colonel Barret's intelligence as true, who has got news of you on his way from Scotland, but the account he brings has given us the greatest mortification: indeed I was so vexed when I heard it that I was forced to leave the room, and I did but just save my distance, for the moment I got out at the door I burst into tears: and this as much at the malicious satisfaction which some people who were with us were not even at the pains to conceal in our presence, amongst whom Mrs. Perrimont and Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair were the very devils of them all: yes, my dear sister, they actually seemed glad that you and Mr. Decastro were reduced to the necessity of keeping a dirty shop to get bread for yourselves and your children! When I returned to the room I felt as if I had a mad dog in my throat the first time I spoke to either of them. I was so en-

 raged

raged at their conduct that I spoke to my lord about it, but he said it must not be noticed for he owed Sir Harry St. Clair a great deal of money: and a cursed king of clubs coming up at a rubber at whist laid me under the hatches to Madam Perrimont for three hundred guineas: so my lord and I were e'en forced to eat our toads and be silent, and be more than civil to people we could be glad to see hanged. Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair, you know, are both of them great mimics; and they must needs give us a specimen of their talents at your expense; Sir Harry tied his handkerchief round him to serve for an apron, a table was made to stand for a counter, and Lady St. Clair came to buy butter, and Mrs. Perrimont was the first to countenance their scandalous buffooneries with her malicious laugh; they met with too much support from the rest who were present, but there was a pre-eminence of malice in her applause—I could

have

have spit in her face!—O how I wished at that moment that the old castle in the north were restored to its ancient grandeur, and that you were shining in it upon twenty thousand a year! There is a time, as good luck will have it, when people grow tired of playing the fool; as soon as this farce was over, as if to make amends for all their malice, Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair put about a subscription for you, and, though not one penny was collected, there were twenty names subscribed in a very charitable way, for there were at least as many people in the room, and none to a less sum than ten guineas. This subscription has since been greatly extended, and, *if we can get the money*, it will purchase an annuity sufficient to keep you out of a filthy shop.

I must now tell you that my lord and I, Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair, and Mrs. Perrimont have made a party to visit the Lakes this summer, when we mean to take you in our way, as

my lord has some business with my brother Bat.—But after all, this letter may never find you; for why may not Colonel Barret's intelligence be false as well as any other story we have heard told of you? These my doubts make this letter shorter than it would have been if I were sure it would come to you.—My love to my brother.

Your very affectionate

SISTER JANE.

What a sad thing it is that folks should ever grow tired of laughing! But it comes to be dangerous if held on too long, forasmuch as it brings pains and stitches in the back and sides, and some have gone so far as to burst themselves, which is no laughing matter. As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Decastro got breath, for they laughed at this letter as long as they had any; they arose from a sofa, on which they had thrown themselves to laugh more at their ease, and devised the following plot

plot to bring these gay folks to the castle. Now the pork and butter shop was not to be given up by any means, and, to give them their due, they certainly made the best of it, though a little at the expense of truth, and that was something strange, for it was the first time that a shop and a lie ever came together since the creation of the world. Mrs. Decastro stuck to Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair till her tongue drew blisters upon their malicious mockeries, and it might not be the first time they deserved to be hanged for their pains; but at all events one should not tell a lie to bring even a murderer to the gallows, though it might be the means, and the only means too, to bring him there, aye, though the letting him loose would be the cutting of ten more throats one after another.—Mr. Decastro stuck a little at the following answer written by Mrs. Decastro to her sister's letter.

My dear Sister,

My poor husband and I beg to return our best thanks for your kind letter, and more especially for that part of it where it is said that a subscription has been put about for us—pray thank all our kind friends in our names: money indeed is a very welcome thing to poor folks in distress—it will indeed be a great happiness to be set upon an independent foot for the remainder of our lives: we owe what little matters we enjoy to the provision and goodness of your brother Bat, and indeed the little bit of bread which we eat he puts into our mouths—he has done great things for us to set us clear of all the world, and bring us into a way to get a maintenance if we will but be careful and diligent in our business. It will give us great pleasure to see our kind friends and benefactors, and thank them in person for their charitable donations: Colonel Barret told you the truth, 'your

your brother Bat has put us into a house at no great distance from his own, and keeps us under his eye and directions: our distresses have so mortified our pride that we shall not run away *for shame* if you condescend to call at our shop.—Your brother begs me to say that he has got some rooms for you and your party at the house of a great man in this neighbourhood, who will not be put to any inconvenience, his place being very large: so far from it that, knowing you and Lord Budemere, he will be much gratified, he says, in having an opportunity to return some civilities which he somewhere received from his lordship. A man will be sent to be your guide from Carlisle to this place. Will you allow me to take the liberty of subscribing myself

Your ladyship's very affectionate sister,
and very thankful and extremely
obliged humble servant,
M. DECASTRO.

Now

Now there were a great many pro's and con's passed between Mr. and Mrs. Decastro upon this letter, and he took some pains to flatter his wife into a mind to burn it, but it was more than he could do, so the letter was sealed and sent. Mrs. Decastro talked a great deal, which is a very unusual thing for a lady to do, about inviting these fine folks to the castle in order to return good for evil: Mr. Decastro must needs have it that there would be revenge in it, that the grandeur of the place would make it a house of correction, and would give a great deal of pain to minds full of envy and malice worse than if they came into Bridewell and got well whipped. This did but give furtherance to his wife's argument that to correct and punish bad people was an act of charity to themselves, as well as to others:—upon this Mrs. Decastro won the day and wore the breeches.

Now Mrs. Decastro was mighty busy

busy in preparing for her company, and drew out her whole stock of grandeur for the occasion: every thing that could shine was brought forward, and she certainly had shining stuff enough about her to content a moderate person. Now the day came, notwithstanding it was fixed, which looks a little like a contradiction in terms, but it is not for all that, when Old Comical was dispatched to Carlisle as the guide aforesaid, and a very fit person, some may think, to come into this farce, as the guide aforesaid, to be ready at the time named by Lord Budemere in his answer to Old Crab's letter: thus far by way of protasis to the matter, that is to say, the forelaying of the ground: the epitasis thereof, that is to say the bustle, comes next.

Now there were many muscles set in motion, and a great deal of straining in the castle, not only to get every thing ready, but to get it ready in the best possible manner, forasmuch as Mrs.

Mrs. Decastro had a mind to let folks' see that her husband fell, like the sun, to rise and shine again, and a very dazzling piece of work she made of it: the grandest service of plate was brought out, the choicest wines, and every nicety which art could invent or money could buy was procured for the table, and so malicious was Mrs. Decastro that she ordered new liveries for all the servants, blue with gold epaulets, and shoulder knots, and the devil knows what! and who should know if the devil did not, who had so great a hand in this matter? Now as soon as the housekeeper and butler had received and executed their orders, and Mrs. Decastro had looked over all to see that nothing might miss fire, she strutted through her stately apartments and eyed all her grandeur over, and felt as spiteful as Old Nic.— " A pork and butter shop, indeed! dealers in snuff and tobacco! They shall have money's worth if they come

to

to our shop, I'll warrant them!" would she say, sometimes casting her eyes on the silk furniture, sometimes on the fine old family pictures, and sometimes on the magnificent painted ceilings: her heart leaped in her bosom at the thought of such exquisite revenge. Now people that have got a great deal of money can do any thing but put it to its right use. Mr. Decastro, (how could he be so silly?)—Mr. Decastro had given orders that a little building should be erected at the park gates, in the form of a little shop, over the door of which was painted in capital letters, JOHN DECASTRO, DEALER IN SNUFF AND TOBACCO. N. B. PORK AND BUTTER BY RETAIL. When this farce was acted Old Crab was confined to his bed with a fever. Now the day was come, as we said before, and say again, to put the reader in mind of it: Lord Budemere and Sir Harry St. Clair's carriages drove to the ferry and Old Comical put the horn to his mouth and

and blew a loud blast to call the ferry-man. After long sitting folks are as glad to stand as after long standing they are glad to sit, which is so far from being a shallow observation that it is a very deep one, for it comes from the bottom; our good people in the carriages had sat till they were tired of their cushions, though softer could not be put underneath a man, and they all got out to rest themselves—and the ladies got o[illegible] a certain other reason; now, fair reader, what makes you in such a fuss? there is nothing the matter; the certain thing that made the ladies get out of their carriages was, that if the horses had a mind to dash out of the ferry-boat into the water they had no mind to go along with them, that's all: adzooks! some folks have such ticklish imaginations, the ladies especially, they are always thinking of things which it is not fit to eat. But we are losing time and talking nonsense—talking nonsense! what

pleases better? and as for losing time it is better lost than found, for what hangs so heavy upon people's hands? But we shall never get these fine folks into the ferry-boat—now they are all in—one admires the fineness of the day, another the beauties of the woods, another the clearness of the water, another the lofty towers of the old castle lifting their magnificent heads over the old oaks on the hill, another—but hold a moment, how many are there of them? Lord Budemere one, Lady Budemere two, Sir Harry St. Clair three, Lady St. Clair four—and Mrs. Perrimont five; we may go on yet safely—another wonders whose fine place the castle is? Now the moral to this prudent stop by the way is this, viz. every one should count his money before he runs into expenses.—If we had run on and set six people to making observations when there were only five in the boat we had as good gone to the devil at once, for we certainly should

should have been sent there. But Old Comical was ready upon the wonder just expressed as to whose fine place the castle might be; forasmuch as Mr. and Mrs. Decastro, merry souls, had tainted him with their fun, inoculated him with their humour, "that noble old pile belongs to one Mr. Decastro," quoth he. "One Mr. Decastro!" said Lord Budemere; "what Mr. Decastro?" "What Mr. Decastro!" quoth Old Comical; "why, my lord, to define the man, that is to say to give his species and his difference, it is Mr. Decastro, a man with a long chin and a nose like the witch of Endor's upon a bit of gingerbread." These words called the attention of the party upon Old Comical, who had rid behind the carriages amongst the servants not much regarded, only giving the word of command now and then to the drivers—"wheel to the right!" or, "wheel to the left!" as need were. Now in the face of Old Comical, not easily forgotten, Lady

St.

St. Clair recognised an old acquaintance, and, tossing her veil over her head, asked him if he did not recollect her? Old Comical, who had some reasons to be a little shy of old acquaintance, gave a shrug, as a man does who drops his eye upon a snake, for he knew her in a moment. "Don't you know me, sir?" said her ladyship. —"Yes, my lady," quoth Old Comical, but not until your ladyship pulled up the little petticoat that hung down over your ladyship's face." "We met once in Northamptonshire?" said she. "Face to face, my lady, face to face: I used to tell lies once, but I have left off that and stealing too, two dogs that run in couples, my lady—two dogs—" "But, pray sir," said she, "what is become of your fine gold-laced waistcoat?" "Left that off too, my lady," quoth Old Comical; "or, if your ladyship pleases, it left me off; it dropped off my back somewhere between Salisbury and Andover, my lady, and

and how far it travelled before it left that road it is taking too much upon me to say." "Are not you ashamed to come to any body's house and tell so many lies as you did at my father's?" said she. "Yes, my lady," quoth Old Comical; "I am ashamed now, but I was not then; my blushes don't fly in my face in a moment, my lady, like some people's blushes, my blushes are a long while a-coming; for instance, my lady, if I did a naughty thing now, I should not blush until this time two years." "This is a devilish odd fellow," said Sir Harry St. Clair. "You would have better reasons to think so, my dear," said her ladyship, "if you knew as much of him as I do." Upon which she told the story of Old Comical's visit at her father's house, where he lay at bed and board for a week, sang his songs, cracked his jokes, and sent the master of the house a hundred miles upon a wild goose chase after some dying relation.

"You

"You sêe what comes of these things," said her ladyship; "a man that does wrong will some day look like a fool." "A man had best always look like a fool," quoth Old Comical, "and then he need not be afraid of being put out of countenance, my lady." "Don't you think you deserve to be hanged," said she, "for robbing the tailor and shoemaker at Northampton?" "I have paid both out of my savings, my lady. Stealing," quoth Old Comical, "is but a sort of running in debt after all; if a thief takes a thing, he does but owe another for it, who is sure never to get paid if he hangs a man: this comes of hanging folks. I never could hold with your capital punishments: a halter gives a man no chance; it saves money, indeed, for if a rogue were left alive, he might grow to be honest and make restitution, but neither amendment, repentance, nor restitution come of a man after he is throttled; this is a great mistake in the laws; send a poor fellow to jail to be

 mended

mended like a pair of breeches with a fault in the tail to their architect—there I hold with you, a stitch in time saves nine. But that christians should ever be so hardhearted, or legislators such fools, as to take away from a man what they cannot give, because he hath taken from another what he might live to return, gives me a fit of the colic whenever I think of it, my lady." "You are a droll hand," said Lord Budemere; "pray, sir, what is your name?" "Why, my lord, folks call me Old Comical, but my name is John Mathers of Cock-a-doodle in Northamptonshire." "What!" said Lady St. Clair, "do you pretend to be related to Mr. Mathers of Northamptonshire?" "I am younger brother to that very gentleman, my lady, worse luck,—he came first and took all, and left me to smell at the empty cupboards." "You have left off telling lies, you say," said her ladyship. "I will never tell another as long as I live, my lady, if the devil

devil don't come slap upon me at a short turning—he jumps upon a man like a cat, sometimes, that is the worst of him." "Come," said her ladyship, "I may be of some service to you, Mr. Mathers has advertised for a lost brother, who, if he can be found, may hear of something very much to his advantage:" upon which Lady St. Clair put her hand into her carriage and gave Old Comical the Morning Post which contained the advertisement. At that moment the boat came ashore. Old Comical put the news into his pocket, not that he wanted curiosity, but time to read the paper, and remounted his horse: so away they all went, Old Comical galloping first, upon full speed, to the park gates: now the gates being shut they stopped thereat, as it was very natural for them to do, when two iron gates, fifteen feet high, stood bolted just before the horses' noses: some may not stick to say this was no good reason for their standing still, and, the hurry they were

 in

in considered, find us guilty of great improbabilities, and add moreover, that when a coach and four goes at full speed no stone wall, much less iron gates, were ever known to stop them: they stopped at the park gates as we were a-saying, however, not because the said gates were shut, perhaps, but because Lord Budemere caught sight of the pork and butter shop which was put there on purpose:—"Here is poor Decastro's shop," exclaimed his lordship, "let us all get out and call on him." At that moment there was a loud laugh heard in Sir Harry's carriage which came behind, for he and her ladyship, having eyes in their heads as well as Lord Budemere, used them to a like purpose and saw the shop and the name above the door as soon as he did. Now Mr. and Mrs. Decastro were quite prepared for their customers, attired like two petty shopkeepers and standing in the midst of their pork and butter all ready laid out for sale; Mr. Decastro had his knife between

his

his teeth when the Earl and Countess of Budemere entered his shop; round his waist he wore a brown Holland apron, upon his person a blue butcher's jacket adorned with white sleeves all covered with blood and grease, as if he had just stuck, or cut out a pig. As soon as the whole party had a full view of him, he retired into a little room as if ashamed to be seen, and left Mrs. Decastro to make an end of the farce: she was very dirty and very ragged— held a bloody cloth in one hand, a loin of pork by the tail in the other, stood and stared like one confounded, and said not a word: on her head she had a cap with long ears to it that covered a good deal of her face, but so begrimed with dirt and grease, as well as her face, which had a cloud of snuff upon it, that her sister could scarce recollect her, but the moment she did she burst into tears, and was forced to go back into her carriage. She shed tears for the whole company, however, for there

was no crying amongst the rest, they were too much in a laughing humour for that. Lord Budemere, it must be said to his honour, looked very grave: Mrs. Decastro had much ado to keep up the comedy when Lady St. Clair, eyeing her through a glass, started back, exclaiming, "Good heavens, this is Mrs. Decastro!" "When folks fall into misfortune, my lady," said Mrs. Decastro, "and grow poor who once were rich, it is no easy matter to be known by their old friends: there was a time, (continued she, making an humble curtsey,) when I could appear on a foot with your ladyship, who did me the honour to visit at my house amongst others of like rank and fashion; but these things will soon sink into oblivion at the sight of a poor shopkeeper." Lady St. Clair, with a haughty toss, said, "she did not recollect her at first," and taking a crimson and gold purse out of her pocket, (the ladies wore pockets at that day,) con-

containing ten guineas, (a guinea was a gold coin current in England at that time,) flung it with an elegant air into Mrs. Decastro's ragged apron, held up to receive her ladyship's charity; but, the purse, in scorn, perhaps, made its way through a great hole in it, and fell into a basket of griskins; upon which Lady St. Clair turned round to Sir Harry, and asked the baronet with a loud laugh, if he did not think the woman had brought her pigs to a good market? Sir Harry, who could laugh the loudest where another would shed tears, took up the basket of pork, and, with much politeness, picked the purse out of the pig-meat and presented it to Mrs. Decastro: upon this, too proud to be outdone by his lady in almsdeeds, the baronet drew out his note-case, and, opening a twenty pound bank bill so that all might see the full value of it, drew it through the air between his finger and thumb like a flag, and walking towards the counter, behind

 which

which Mrs. Decastro had retired with her purse to put the money into the till, laid it at its full length upon the shop-board; upon which Mrs. Decastro took the bank-note, looked at its value, made the baronet a curtsey, and humbly thanked him. Having poured the gold out of the purse, she came and returned it to Lady St. Clair, who, shocked at the sight of it after it had defiled itself amongst the pork griskins, flung it from her with indignation, and called Mrs. Decastro a nasty woman. Now Lord Budemere, casting an eye of superiority upon the baronet, took out a thirty pound note, and, telling Mrs. Decastro how much pain it gave him that she should come to want such a trifle, put it into her hand with great expression of sorrow in his countenance. Mrs. Perrimont stood by the while, and, holding up her petticoats for fear of getting grease from the dirty floor, bore witness to all that passed. Now, as soon as others,

others, had gratified their charitable appetites, she came forward lest she should be outdone—pride is a virtue, it makes folks so very charitable—lest she should be outdone in charity she came forward with her ten pound note, and, making Mrs. Decastro an apology for the smallness of her contribution, as being a traveller, and not having much money about her, put on her glove first, and then ventured to put the note into Mrs. Decastro's dirty paws. Now Lady Budemere gave her nothing but her tears, a more valuable present than any she had received from all the rest put together.

CHAPTER XII.

How Lord Budemere and his Party were received at the Castle.

Mrs. Decastro, having repeated her thanks and her curtsies, made an excuse for her husband, who was, she said, too much affected to be seen at that time, but if the party would do him so much honour as to call at their shop the next day, he might summon resolution sufficient to see them: thus far Mrs. Decastro supported her character like an actress of no common merit, but, to make room for the party to get out of the shop, which was very small, she had the ill luck to press her pocket against the counter and set her repeater a-striking in it!—Now this was so uncommon a sound to be expected in such a place that every body present took notice of it: Mrs. Decastro, however,—O that wit were ever so at hand!—instantly said that her husband did a little business

in

in the watch-making way, and she had just been to fetch the lady's watch from the great house. Upon which, Lord Budemere promising to call the next day, they all got into their carriages, and there was a loud laugh heard in Sir Harry's as they drove through the park gates. Being now come into the middle of the park, and into a full view of the superb old castle, Lord Budemere stopped his carriage and calling out to Old Comical, began to question him about it and its owner. "Why, my lord," quoth Old Comical, "the woman at the shop would have told you all about it if you had asked her; the castle and the park, and a world besides belong to one 'Squire Decastro; and it is the very house we have been looking for all day; but if your lordship thinks you shall lose your way to it now you see it, I will ride with your lordship up to the gates, and put the building into your lordship's hand." "O this is the

house

house we are to be at, is it?" said Lord Budemere; "pray what is the name of this place?" "Why, didn't I tell your lordship the name of it?" "No," said he, "not knowing this to be the place we were coming to, I did not ask for any thing but the owner's name."— "The name of this place," quoth Old Comical, "is Oaken Grove." Saying which Old Comical took off his hat and wig at the same time, either for more respect to his lordship, or because one stuck fast in the other, and, branching off into a side road, galloped away to Old Crab's farm-house. Now Lord Budemere and his party galloped over the draw-bridge and under a superb archway into the square, and coming up to the grand entrance were received by four or five servants in splendid liveries at the hall door. They were then shown into a large apartment, which was called the saloon, and the butler came to inform them that Mr. and Mrs. Decastro were in their dressing-rooms,

and that the first bell had just been rung for dinner. They were now shown to their apartments, which were some of the best in the castle, much wondering who this Mr. Decastro could be that was the owner of this noble palace. Curiosity puts folks into the fidgets: Lord Budemere and his party never dressed themselves in such a hurry for dinner in their lives. Who could this Mr. Decastro be? was he some relation? how came he to be so long unknown? how came the world never to have heard of him? had he bought the castle? did he rent it? how the devil came he into it? "There may be ten Decastros in the world, my dear," said Lord Budemere to the countess, "and we none the wiser." "That is true," said she, "so far as the 'may be' goes —but my poor sister (O that she and my poor brother were living in this place!)—but my poor sister said in her letter, that the owner of this place was known to us—we should have apartments

ments in the house of a person that knew us—not only knew us, but one who had received civilities from us, and would be glad of an opportunity to make us a return." "That is very true," said Lord Budemere, "and makes the thing still more amazing!"—

Now, reader, we will clap an ear to the key-hole of Sir Harry's door, and try what we can pick up on that side—

Sir Harry. What a detestable thing must pride be when one cannot even see it punished without feeling gratified at its agonies!

Lady St. Clair. The Decastros have but justice; they owed the world a fall; the debt is paid;—to be sorry when bad people are punished, is to be a partaker in their guilt. The punishment of the arrogant, and the humiliation of the proud is a feast for an angel; for who but a devil can be sorry when justice is done? With what contempt have these Decastros looked down

upon

upon the world, what equipages have they kept, what entertainments have they given, what grandeur have they displayed in their houses, in their tables, and their amusements! how many have they invited to insult them with their magnificence; how many have they entertained to make them feel their inferiority! It was a disgrace not to be where all the great world was invited, not to have one's name in the grand catalogue, and be able to talk of Mrs. Decastro's rout, Mrs. Decastro's masquerade, Mrs. Decastro's breakfast, Mrs. Decastro's music—to be shut out of her parties was to be shut out of heaven! to be admitted was to be admitted into a place of torment: the haughty look, the superior air, the elevated brow, the contemptuous smile, the premeditated neglect the toss of arrogance and the sneer of pride stung one like hornets, and, what was worse, got at the tenderest part about one too: then look where one would

would, every object that took the eye brought vexation, as who should say, what can you do when compared to us? We were invited to enjoy the sunshine, but not to try to imitate the sun: we were invited to worship and welcome, but not to aspire to be divinities: we were invited to be shown how very little little things are when put by the side of great ones: their entertainments were so grand that nothing was omitted that could sink us in our own estimation—this was the handwriting on Mrs. Decastro's stately walls, " Thou art weighed with us in the balance and found wanting."

Sir Harry. I hope Mrs. Decastro's customers will not have that to say of her pork and butter.

Reader! Mrs. Perrimont is talking very much to herself, put your ear a minute to the crack of her door and hear her soliloquy.

Mrs. Perrimont. Well, for my part, I always hated high noses; there is no

harm

harm in hating pride, I suppose, for pride is a great sin, and to hate them that are bad is no mean sign of one's own goodness, for he that hates the devil gives good earnest of not loving what is bad. The Decastros are down at last, and I rejoice to feel so much virtue in myself as to be glad that they are totally ruined! They are dead and buried in a dirty shop, and it is not possible that they can rise again. The mighty mountain is sunk into the earth which stood between the sun and half the world. It is as flat as flat can be, that's the beauty of it! and I could scarce have thought that I had such good principles in me as to feel so gratified at it—so rejoiced—in such raptures! How a lucky hit shows one's virtues!—If these proud devils had not been ruined now, I should never have known half my own excellence. I never loved wicked people, it is true, but I never could have imagined that I hated them so cordially as to be so overjoyed

overjoyed at their downfal as at this moment. They have got a snug shop though, after all, and, I dare say, serve all the neighbourhood with pork steaks and fresh butter: but come, I feel that I have christian charity in me too, I am glad that they are in a fair way to get their bread; I have a feeling heart. Good heavens! how these people have been hated and worshipped, visited and detested, flattered and admired, even by those who, like me, could have been glad to have cut their throats! The justice of heaven has managed matters better—to have knocked them on the head with a couple of thunder-stones, though a thing devoutly to be wished, and a glorious exhibition to all the world, would have been a bungling business to such a visitation as this—they might have been cast into hell and scorched for their arrogance and pride on earth, and none the wiser, none the better for it;—but now they are held up as an example in the very nose and eyes

eyes of the world, they are punished in the very presence, to the very forehead of that world which their high and haughty insolence has disgusted and offended! Heaven now holds up their faces for every body to spit into—holds out their noses for every body to pull—their flesh to the spurns and kicks of every body who has a mind to lift up the foot of indignation! for this we thank thee, O ——

The second bell now rang and cut Mrs. Perrimont off—aye, in the very middle of her thanksgiving.—To proceed with the story: the butler waited at the foot of the grand staircase, and conducted the Earl and Countess, Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair, and Madam Perrimont through the great saloon, which was next the hall, into the library, and then through the little saloon into the crimson drawing-room, so called from its superb furniture which was crimson velvet and gold. The party followed the servant in silence—

and

and the butler might have led them through a horsepond and they none the wiser, gaping and staring as they walked along at the variety of grand things that shone like the stars on all hands. Two or three footmen arrayed in splendid liveries put them some chairs ready, and left them to shift for themselves. When any thing very grand, or very new, or very odd, or very comical comes in folks' way, they stare first, and then fall to talking; this was just the case with our fine folks here, who soon filled the splendid apartment wherein they were with notes of admiration. Now it came to pass in the very middle of all their wonderings whose this grand place, and whose these grand things could be, that the drawing-room door was opened on a sudden, and Mrs. Decastro walked into it dressed in a very elegant manner! The amazement which her appearance occasioned could not have been greater if she had walked out of a tomb!

Reader!

Reader! did your head ever run round upon your shoulders like a coach wheel? because if it never did you can have no idea how giddy the apparition of Mrs. Decastro made these good folks; and, what added not a little to the whirlpool in their brains, Mrs. Decastro had but that very moment entered at one door when Mr. Decastro made his bow at another: Lord Budemere rubbed his eyes, Lady Budemere cried Ha! Sir Harry felt for his opera-glass, Lady St. Clair stamped with her foot, and Mrs. Perrimont was turned into a post. There was a deep silence for two or three minutes, notwithstanding there were no less than four women in the room! a man might have bored a hole with a nail piercer and then taken a hammer and driven a tenpenny nail into the body of any man or woman in Lord Budemere's party, and he or she have felt no more of it than if a spike had been hammered into an apple tree! There was no such thing as flesh and blood

blood in the place, except what Mr. and Mrs. Decastro had about them! who now advanced to shake hands, pay the usual compliments to their company, and restore suspended animation to these bewildered creatures, who were almost drowned in astonishment. The second bell now rang for dinner, a charming piece of music to a man with a good stomach, when the butler came in and said that the dinner was put upon the table; and, taking the lead to open the doors, which is more than many can do for themselves, ushered the company into a noble dining-room that glittered with plate like a silversmith's shop: and a very magnificent apartment it was, lined and skirted to the top with fine old oak, and adorned with a broad cornice of fruit and flowers, curiously wrought in the same wood: on the ceiling was painted the return of the Prodigal Son, designed and executed by the hand of some great master, round the edges of

which was cast a deep border of pigs of all sorts, shapes, and sizes, throwing themselves into a variety of frisks, leaps, jumps, sports, attitudes, and gesticulations: furthermore in each of the four corners of the gorgeous roof lay four old sows suckling thirteen pigs apiece, extended at their ease on straws of gold. The furniture was composed of rich blue silk damasked with flowers, and round about the room were disposed, with judicious elegance, a profusion of gold, silver, and costly china ornaments: the windows exhibited a grand sample of fine old painted glass; in the first window was painted a large committee of hogs holding a solemn council of war; in the second window were two armies of swine drawn up in battle array; in the third the two armies were in the heat and fury of an engagement; numberless pigs lay stretched out upon the field of battle, and the blood ran in streams all about the window; in the fourth there was a

triumphal procession of hogs, in the midst of which, mounted on a car of victory, rode an enormous boar eating a great carrot, and the juice running out of both corners of his mouth.—But to return to our party: their eating and drinking may be brought as one proof of their coming to their senses, doing no little justice to Mr. Decastro's costly viands and delicious wines; which were so excellent, and smelled so sweet, that a marble statue of Epicurus ran from its pedestal and sat down to dinner with the rest of the company; a liberty it was never known to take before, though it had stood in Mr. Decastro's dining room for many years. Well, much talk passed, and many welcomes and compliments between Mr. and Mrs. Decastro and their guests, without one word, at present, upon the pork-shop: a pleasant glance was now and then exchanged between mine host and mine hostess, but nothing further, forasmuch as they merely

lay by for the cue from their company, who eyed them quite as much as they peeped and watched on their side for their hearts; Old Comical putting in his nose, at times, amongst the servants, who dearly loved a joke, to see how matters went on. As soon as the dinner was carried away, for when people have filled themselves as full as they can hold, they are content to part with what they cannot eat; as soon as the dinner was carried out, and the worst part of eating is that it quite spoils the appetite, as soon as dinner was carried out, and when a man hath filled his belly to quarrel and knock the servants on the head for taking away what meat may be left upon the bones were ill manners, as soon as dinner was carried out, the wine and dessert set, and the servants all gone, curiosity began to be very riotous in certain people, the ladies especially, when Mrs. Perrimont, who could hold out no longer, when Mrs. Perrimont, who had sat in

a bursting condition all dinner time, when Mrs. Perrimont, who really was in such distress that she fidgetted about on her chair as if the devil was between her and her cushion, when Mrs. Perrimont, staring at Mrs. Decastro, said, that she and the rest of her party had been robbed at the Park gates! Mr. and Mrs. Decastro kept fast hold of their countenances, and they had great need, for if one muscle had broken loose it had spoiled the jest. "Robbed at the Park gates!" said Mr. Decastro. "Robbed at the Park gates!" said Mrs. Decastro; and both put a great lie into their faces, for they made countenance as if they knew nothing at all about the matter. Now, as soon as Mrs. Perrimont had broken the shell, out came white and yolk and all together—Lord Budemere said he had been robbed of more than all the rest; Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair pushed on after his lordship, and they all cried out upon their losses like—we must owe you a simile,

reader

reader, for we cannot, at present, find any noise in nature at all equal to their outcries. Upon this, videlicet the great noise—Mr. Decastro held up his hand for a little silence, and begged his noble brother, Lord Budemere, would tell the story for all the rest. Upon which the peer arose in a very graceful manner, and, stretching forth his right hand, which was as much as to say that he would make his words good against any man with his fist, stretching forth his right hand, told the whole story of the pork and butter shop. As soon as the noble lord had told his story, and shut his mouth up, to the truth of which every body in his lordship's party bore ample testimony, Mr. Decastro arose in his turn, and said they must all be very much mistaken, for wherever they had met with a shop on the road they certainly had seen no such thing at the park gates. "What gates do you call those on the brow of the hill," said Sir Harry, "at fifty yards

 distance

distance from the ferry?" "Those are my park gates, certainly," said Mr. Decastro, "but I am sure there is no such thing as any shop there." "But I will bet you fifty guineas," said Sir Harry in haste, "that there is a shop there, and that pork and butter, snuff and tobacco, are sold in it at this moment!" "There was a time," said Mr. Decastro, "when I would have taken any bet you dared to offer—but that time is gone by—however, I do assure you, upon my honour, that there is no shop at my park gates, or any house there, except the lodge on the right hand side coming to the castle." "You mean," said Lord Budemere, "a white stone building with gothic windows painted green?" "I do," said Mr. Decastro, "I built the same last year at my park gates." "And will you say," rejoined Sir Harry, "that there is no such thing as a pork and butter shop immediately opposite to this lodge at your park gates?" "I will not only say it, but

pledge

pledge my honour that no such exists there," said Mr. Decastro; "surely I ought to know what I have at my park gates!" Upon which Sir Harry jumped up like a man that had a devil, and swore a great oath that he and all his party had not only seen the shop, but had all been in it, and been robbed in it too, not more than an hour before dinner: upon this each person named the sums of money which had been taken from them. Mr. Decastro then said that he had taken notice of something very odd in the looks and demeanour of the whole party ever since they had been in the house, and begged to know what wine they had drunk with their sandwiches? Upon which Sir Harry called aloud for the devil to take him if he did not go that moment to the park gates, and bring a pound of pork-steaks to make his words good; and away he went like a man that had taken a dose of physic. Now in the worthy baronet's absence every-

 body

body bore Mr. and Mrs. Decastro down, say what they would, that there certainly was a pork and butter shop at the park gates, and urged the impossibility of so many people being deceived all together: Mr. and Mrs. Decastro insisting upon it that there was no such thing, Lord Budemere begged that the man who was sent to be their guide from Carlisle, might be called in to corroborate their assertions. At that moment some one knocked at the door with a knuckle, and, at a word, in came Old Comical himself with a letter in his hand for Mr. Decastro: all knew him in a moment, and Lord Budemere, begging silence, for more mouths than one opened upon Old Comical, said, he would be very glad to ask him a question; whereupon Old Comical turned his face to the noble lord in expectation thereof: "I think," said his lordship, "for I can scarce be sure of any thing to day, that you told us your name was John Mathers?"

Mathers?" "I did, my lord," quoth he. "At all events," said his lordship, "I am so far right—pray, Mr. John Mathers, what gates do you call those at fifty yards distance from the ferryman's house?" "The park gates, my lord," quoth Old Comical. "Do you know of any houses built at or near the said gates?" "Yes, my lord." "How many?" "How many!" quoth Old Comical; "why, there is none at all but the lodge, that I know of, my lord." "None but the lodge!" said his lordship; "why I'll swear there was a shop there when we came through to-day, kept by one John Decastro; the man's name, and the goods in which he deals, were painted in capital letters on a piece of board half as broad as this table, which was nailed up over his door!" Old Comical stared at the wine, and then at his lordship, by turns, and looked like a man that had much ado to keep his countenance. "Why, you scoundrel!" said Lord Budemere in a rage, "do

 you

you take me to be drunk! I'll swear that there was a shop at the park gates this morning!" "What there might be at the park gates this morning, my lord," said Old Comical, "I will not venture now to say, but I am just come through the park gates with this letter, and I am sure there is no such thing as a shop there now:—but I met a mad sort of a gentleman there who was very busy in looking for one, he had not found it, however, when I came away." At that moment in came Sir Harry, and how wise soever he might have looked when he went out, he certainly looked very much like a fool when he came in again. "This is the very man," continued Old Comical: "well, sir," said he, addressing the baronet, "did you find the pork and butter shop? I hope your honour had dined, for it would have been no easy matter to have got a pork-steak at the park gates.' The baronet began to curse and to swear, (and when a man is apt

to tell lies it is very fit that he should swear to what he says,) that the devil had flown away with the pork shop, for there was no such thing now to be found at the park gates!—Mr. and Mrs. Decastro fell a-laughing; but Old Comical looked very grave, and said, that the pork and butter shop must certainly be a second sight, and something would happen before long at the park gates. Lord Budemere leaped out of his chair, seized Old Comical by the collar, and, doubling his fist in his eyes, asked him if he dared to deny that the whole party had stopped their carriages, had got out, and went into a shop which stood opposite the lodge at the park gates?" "It must be a much bolder man than I," quoth Old Comical, "to dare to deny any thing while such a fist is held within an inch of my nose; there was certainly a pork and butter shop at the park gates any time to-day your lordship pleases." "Take care what you

 say,

say, you rascal," said Lord Budemere shaking his fist.—" I do take all the care I can," quoth old Comical, " and I were mad to be careless at this awful moment—but if your lordship force me to say what you please you must e'en thank yourself if you get a lie for your pains: a man were a fool not to say any thing to save his eyes from being knocked out of his head; but it is very hard that your lordship cannot see a ghost without making another man swear to it!" " A ghost! you rascal," quoth his lordship, " what ghost? I and the rest of our party got out of our carriages, and went into a little shop at the park gates, and we all saw certain quantities of butter set ready for sale in it, and a pig cut into little bits, and laid out in haslets, chops, steaks, and griskins." " It was all air, my lord," quoth Old Comical, " the butter was a ghost, and is melted into thin air; the pork-steaks, haslets, chops, and griskins all hobgoblins vanished

now,

now, shop and all, into thin invisible wind. It was well your lordship did not eat any thing in this shop; what a terrible thing it would have been for your lordship to have had a ghost in your belly!—And who can tell how a pig may chuse to revisit the earth after it has been stuck? who can say that it may not come again in steaks and griskins? who can say—angels and ministers of grace defend us!—who can say that butter may not rise again after it has been eaten, and haunt people? uneasy, perhaps, at being sold under weight or over price—some damned trick or other has been played at that part of the park where the gates now stand in ages past, some sad rogue hath kept a shop there and cheated people in former times, depend upon it, my lord—and that accounts for the whole shop and all the stock in trade appearing to your lordship."

"What sad rogue may have kept a shop there in ages past I will not say," quoth

quoth his lordship; "but this I will say, that some sad rogue kept a shop there this morning and robbed our party of the best part of an hundred pounds amongst us, and the matter shall be looked into before we leave this part of the world." "Your lordship must have bought a great deal of pork and butter," quoth Old Comical, "to come to so much money, I can't think what you will do with it all! you can never eat it while it is good." "Pork and butter!" said his lordship; "we parted with our money and have got nothing but our fools' heads to show for it!" "What!" quoth Old Comical, "did your lordship give away your money to a spectre? What can a ghost want money for? He neither eats nor drinks, wears out no stockings, shoes, or breeches; comes into people's houses and never pays any rent,—then, unless he is taxed, what the devil can a ghost want money for? A ghost may go out of the world without pay-

ing

ing his bills, but when he has once got clear off and out of the reach of bailiffs, constables, writs and executions, he must needs be a very foolish apparition to come poking his nose into the world again to cheat folks out of more money, and rob Peter to pay Paul: besides, if he leaves the key of the cupboard behind him, let those that come in for the bread and cheese and his clothes pay his debts—it is amazing that such trifles as these should ever disturb folks in their graves that never disturbed them in their beds! Ghosts that have had their throats cut have felt sore enough upon it, folks say, to come back again to tell the news; and some that have buried pots of money, and the heels of old stockings full of guineas, have risen again to serve an old acquaintance, and give another, with vast generosity, what they have no further use for themselves,—but that a couple of hobgoblins should take it into their heads to come upon

the

the earth, build a shop, stock the same, and fall to selling people pork and butter—" "You chattering rascal," quoth his lordship, "we have been played a trick, and you are quite the sort of fellow, with the devil's help, to have a hand in it;—but, upon recollection, madam," said he to Mrs. Decastro, "I have a letter here, which my lady received a few weeks since, by the complexion of which we might very well expect to find you and my good brother in the very situation in which we saw you, sir, and you, madam, or two folks very much like you, at a little house in the corner of the park." "I wonder," quoth Old Comical, "folks can be so indecent as not to shut the door when they go to such places!" upon which he fell into a loud laugh; when Lord Budemere immediately seized him by the collar, and, setting his foot upon what follows a man of consequence kicked him out of the room. Now a man cannot go out of an apartment

with

with more pleasure to himself, or entertainment to others, than when he is kicked out of it, and that for reasons too obvious to need any mention in this place.—" This is an amazing long chapter!" Very well, reader—make a mark with your thumb-nail and put the book down if you want wind—or, if you please, madam, you may lay your leg in the book to keep your place, and put the volume upon the mantlepiece, there's no great difficulty in that.

During the aforesaid operation, we mean the kicking poor Old Comical out of the room, and none surely can be so unfeeling at the bottom as not to sympathise with what he felt in it—the antecedent to the relative " it," fair reader, is not bottom, as you modestly suppose, but operation:—when you can pick your way you must step slap into the dirt to chuse!—during the aforesaid operation, Lady Budemere had put a few odd questions to Mrs. Decastro

Decastro concerning a certain epistle, which were put with such consummate art as to make a sort of double shot of it, with a sly aim at Mr. as well as Mrs. Decastro, as who should say either may answer me that pleases, Mr. Decastro, therefore, arose, and addressing his lady, who sat at the other end of the table, spake as followeth: viz. Mr. Decastro's mouth is open we know, but, before any thing comes out at it, we must beg leave to speak a few words ourselves—" Mrs. Decastro who sat at the other end of the table"—

Scholium.

A very good way to keep man and wife apart, they may quarrel, and they may pelt one another with potatoes, but as long as there are eight or ten feet of stout mahogany between them they cannot get at one another, to come to fighting before company.—But we must not forget that we left Mr. Decastro with his mouth open,

who,

who, from the aforesaid port hole of the brains, discharged the following, words—

Viz.

"My dear," quoth the loving gentleman, addressing his matter to his wife, "my dear," said he, for it may be remembered how apt he was to drop a drop of sweet-oil in her ear, "my dear," said he, though some husbands say, "Take that, my dear," and give their wives a good knock on the head; but he said, that is to say, Mr. Decastro said, "my dear," with a drop of honey hanging at the end of his tongue; "my dear," said he, not calling her dear because he had given more than she were worth for her, as a man may say of a wife bought for twenty-pence and a quartern of gin at Smithfield, with a halter round her neck; "my dear," said he, not meaning to call her a drunken extravagant toad, that scored him up for brandy, ale,

ale, and bitters, perkin, perry, rum, and the queen's-water, at every alehouse that she got smell of—no—" my dear," said he, that is to say, he did not say what he never said—don't be in such a devil of a hurry, reader, we shall come to Mr. Decastro's speech in the course of half a score pages—" my dear," said he, stretching out his hand as if to catch her by the nose—the nose! yes, the nose; what should a man catch his wife by? what catches one's attention sooner than a pull by the nose? drag a man by the nose, and five times out of fifty you will draw his attention: adsbobs! one's wits must be gone a wool-gathering indeed, if a man hath one's nose in his hand or a pair of tongs, and we none the wiser! If any lady or gentleman cannot smell such a thing as that they can smell nothing: to fire off a gun we must pull it by the trigger; to fire off a man we must pull him by the nose:—that's nothing to the purpose

at

at all: yes, but it is though, and for this very reason, for the nearest way from London to St. Alban's lies directly through Hounslow.—"My dear," said Mr. Decastro, stretching forth his hand, as if to catch her by the nose, "how glad shall we make the hearts of our kind friends that sit round our table, when we tell them all the good news of this our fortunate situation! when we tell them how well we have sold our butter, and to what a good market we have brought all our pigs! how all the old women brought their snuff-boxes to our shop for snuff, and how not a pipe was filled for ten miles round but by the genuine tobacco sold retail by John Decastro! But having scraped together a little money by honest industry, and put by a little bit of bread for our old age, having got a good house over our heads, and laid the crumbs of comfort about us, will not our kind friends join us in an opinion that it is now high time to leave off

off business, and resign to some other the good-will of the pork and butter-shop?"

Mr. and Mrs. Decastro were certainly young people when this pretty comedy was acted, and, though some may think that it might have made more for their reputation if it had been passed over altogether in silence by the historian, it may, however, be submitted that, trifling as it may appear in the eyes of Sir Isaac Solomon, the malevolent pride and envy of some folks concerned in it met with a very seasonable rebuke in the exhibition of it. Now it is not one of the least poisonous of the ill humours that ebb and flow in the human heart, the malice it feels at the good estate of another, and the delight to see a poor man gnaw a dirty bone like a beggar's dog upon a dunghill, rather than smack his lips over a slice of venison swimming upon a silver plate in sweet sauce and rich gravy. Some of these fine folks came

came into Mr. Decastro's gorgeous old castle as the devil came into Paradise; whose rage, like old Satan's, was aggravated in proportion to the good things which they found in it. Old Crab was not invited to this pleasant comedy, for, as soon as he got well of his fever, he engaged himself with that eagerness which he always felt in another's service, in the affairs of his noble brother-in-law. Good night t'ye, reader, you look sleepy.



CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lord and Lady Budemere, Sir Harry and Lady St. Clair, and Madam Perrimont leave Oaken Grove—a little Touch upon what befel before they turned the Part which is not before upon Mr. and Mrs. Decastro.

We hope you slept well last night, reader, and that your wife, sir, or your husband, madam, did not kick and sprawl about the bed, as the manner of some is, who go to sleep with their heads on the pillow and wake with their feet there, which is inconvenient: it puts us in mind of a story, however.—Once upon a time there lived an old maid named Madam Stickleback, very lean, and at fifty years of age what flesh she had was all turned into horn, which made her so very stiff that she had a hard matter to sit down, and, when once down, she had as hard a matter to get up again and straighten herself, so that her sitting down and

her

her uprising, she moved so stiff in the hinges, cost her ten minutes each." Now it came to pass that Madam Stickleback, who was very regular in all her motions, turned round in her bed like the hand of a clock; she never rolled over bottom upwards or face downwards, no, she always lay flat upon her back in the very center of a bed, which she had been measured for, and had made six feet by six, being the precise length of Madam Stickleback's body; in the very center of which Madam Stickleback lay as aforesaid, and turned round in it like the stiff hand of an old-fashioned church clock which turns upon a pivot stuck through the middle of it, aye turned round in it just as if Madam Stickleback's body moved upon a gudgeon and pintle exactly in the middle of her bed. Now it came to pass furthermore that the said Madam Stickleback was whimsical, and she had the twelve hours duly and at equal spaces marked

 in

in black ink upon her sheet, and she began with her pillow-bier, forsooth, upon which was put the number 12, at which hour she always laid her head down to rest: how regular Madam Stickleback was in all her motions, sleeping as well as waking, will now be seen: as soon as she fell asleep Madam Stickleback began to move, and in one hour's time her head came to one and her feet to seven, when Madam Stickleback gave a grunt as much as to say it is one o'clock; in another hour's time Madam Stickleback's head came to two and her feet pointed at eight, when she gave two grunts, as who should say it is two o'clock; when Madam Stickleback's head came to three her feet pointed at nine, when she gave three grunts, which was as much as to say it is three o'clock in the morning: when Madam Stickleback's head came to four she uttered four grunts to give notice it was four o'clock, and so on: but not to strike

Ma-

Madam Stickleback all round, if a man had come in at any hour, and looked at the position of Madam Stickleback's body, he might have set his watch by her, or, if he had had her at sea he might have determined the longitude by the old virgin with as much precision as by Mr. John Harrison's chronometer. To finish our story, reader, Madam Stickleback, after a regular series of motions, and a regular number of grunts, Madam Stickleback returned her head to her pillow, and grunting twelve times rang her bell and called for the cherry-brandy bottle, forasmuch as she then wanted winding up.

Now, reader, if your stomach serves for it, we will return to Mr. Decastro's dining-room, where we shall find plenty of Burgundy and claret, and a grand dessert set out in baskets of silver to the no little mortification of his noble guests, who daubed their faces with the sweetest smiles to hide the bitter-

ness of their hearts: there was a sting in the tail of this trick of the pork-shop, which made a wound like a wasp, and injected poison into it at the same time: Mr. Decastro's shining the more brightly in proportion as his shining was the less expected, stung their souls; and their envious momentary triumph over the degraded shop-keepers, recoiled upon them in proportion to the malice with which their souls were charged: but the kind-hearted countess must be put down as an exception, who retired to her carriage in tears as soon as she saw the wretched situation of Mr. and Mrs. Decastro: now it was her turn to rejoice, and her joy was worth fifty times the joy of the others. Lady St. Clair felt more vexed than any, as it was her due, for she had been the most saucy: Lord Budemere was vexed too, but pleased at the same time: how could that be? why, reader, he was vexed to find that his brother-in-law had still

more

more shining stuff about him than he whose title was greater, but whose income was now like to be less; and pleased to find that Mr. Decastro was not like to quarter the pork-griskin with the family arms: but in each of the hearts of the three others there was a devil's nest where the furious young harpies tore away the vitals with beak and talons, and made a worse stir-about than the vulture did in the liver of old Prometheus. "Brother Decastro," said the earl, "how the devil came all these things to pass? I am in such amazement that I scarce know where I am, I feel like one enchanted!" "Why, my lord," said Mr. Decastro, "you are not, nor can be, in greater amazement than I was: my brother Bat has done wonders for me, and made me in every way a better man than ever I was in my life." "What!" exclaimed the baronet, "has Old Crab done all these things? why, it was said in town he could

scarce find five shillings in the pound for your creditors! The devil take Old Crab, *I say*, for telling such lies!"

"Come, come, Sir Harry," quoth Mr. Decastro, "I will not have my brother Bat abused; and as for lies, others may tell lies for him, but I am sure he never told any himself: brother Bat has a rugged outside, but a good and valuable heart, which lies in him like the pearl in the rough sea-shell: he spares no pains to serve a man, and will take nothing for his pains when he has done: some work the harder the better they are paid; brother Bat will work the harder the less he gets for his labour; he will take pay at no man's hands: he refused all I could offer for what he has done for me—Brother Bat, said I, I will take no more rent for the farm which you hold of me: then you may take your farm, brother, said he, and hang it about your neck, and I'll go and rent another man's land: what the plague d'ye take

me

me for, John? His lease fell in with several others, when he raised his own farm in proportion to all the rest—this, by the by, was a piece of good fortune for me and gave my brother an opportunity to put a vast addition to my income—Brother Bat, said I, I will take none but the old rent from you—it was in vain—he paid the advanced rent into my banker's hands—Brother John, he replied, I have laid by a little money for my young wench out of your land—and a little money for my wife and myself against a bad year—I am content, and I heartily thank God for his goodness. He would take nothing but my thanks for all his services, and said, you are now clear of all the world, John, it cannot call upon you for one farthing—a word in your ear—"Take heed." "Clear of the world!" said the earl; "why how came you to get clear of the world, and not only that, but find such a splendid balance to live on, when your

 wife

wife told Lady Budemere that if your estates were multiplied by I know not what, they would all come but as dust into the scale againt the weight of your debts?" "Why I am ashamed," said Mr. Decastro, "to tell you the truth, though it were well if I had no greater cause for shame; my wife and I must needs fall to summing of all things in the world, take it into our wise heads to cast up the bills, and a glorious cast we made of it, but we were willing to owe enough, at all events, for we made it out that we owed money enough to ruin old Crœsus. I thought it best to take horse while I had one in the stable, and rode away from London as if all London had been at my heels, and ran for shelter into the north. If a man is like to come into large possessions, nine times in ten he is bred a dunce, when the more property a man is like to have, the more pains should be taken to teach him how to take care of it. The less a

man

man knows the wiser he is sure to think himself, which is one of the greatest misfortunes of ignorance; I must needs think so and got terribly frightened for my pains: my brother let me alone in order to bring my blunders to a good account, I set myself down for a ruined man upon my own knowledge, and my alarms, as it happened, have been of great use to me. When my brother opened my eyes, the first thing I saw was this, viz. that I was a great fool: now you cannot do a fool a greater piece of service than convince him that he is one, which, indeed, is no easy matter—the thing was done in my case, however, and the first wise thing I did was to take a step towards getting wise: I had luck on my side, for my brother was at hand who was able to instruct me, and I soon began to find that the best thing I ever did in my life was to take a few lessons of him: finding me apt to learn, he told me, by way of encourage-

encouragement, that, by the help of some old leases falling in, my income, instead of being less than it was, would be more than it used to be, and that he could put me and my family into the old castle, where he advised me to live, and I most certainly will do so, in a manner quite suitable to the dignity of my ancestors." "I am heartily glad to see this," said Lord Budemere, "but cannot forgive you, sir, for keeping your friends in the south so totally in the dark in this matter." "To tell you the truth, my lord," said Mr. Decastro, "I do not think I left many there who would not have been more vexed than pleased at the news of my good fortune, so to keep them in the dark was to do them a kindness; who had set me to stick pigs and my wife to sell butter." "The devil take me, Decastro," said Sir Harry, "but this was an abominable trick, and I can scarce forgive you for it—but what the devil became of your pork shop?"

—Mr.

—Mr. Decastro laughed, and said that he ordered his people to take it away, and share the contents amongst them as soon as he came out of it. "Well, but my good brother," said Lord Budemere, "I cannot suffer such a thing to be said of your friends without reverting to it, and speaking a word in their behalf."—"The less you say, my lord, the better," replied Mr. Decastro, "of those whom you please to call my friends, and you will best consult both their ease and their credit, when you return into the south, by not undeceiving them in regard to my matters:—I have been much to blame, I entertained them too handsomely not to get their hatred for outshining them, and I could not so much as do one civil thing at last, but it was set down to my pride rather than to my good nature; and I am sorry to say that it is my firm belief that most of those, whom your lordship calls my friends, would be more gratified in

seeing me sell pork by the pound, than thus entertaining my friends with venison and claret. I come no more among such whom I have no mind to please so much at my own expense; one way, however, I am like to gratify these my good friends, I shall vex them no more with my fine parties and grand entertainments; my wife, indeed, may do as she pleases, but these dregs have long since subsided in me." "Well, but devil take it, Decastro," said Sir Harry, "you mean to come amongst us again? You must meet us at the old places and laugh at the hoax of the pork shop! You will not spend all your days in this odd corner of the world amidst woods and waters? Remember you have left an ill vapour behind you, come forth and shine again, and dispel, like the sun, the fog that hangs upon your name—come out of your hole and join us next season in town."—"You will not see my face again in London, Sir Harry," said Mr. Decastro.

Decastro.—The baronet making a countenance of surprise—"You may stare, sir," continued he, "but I come no more amongst ye, nor into a place that I cannot think on without regret." "Pshaw," quoth Sir Harry, "you will stay here and get pickled in Old Crab's vinegar—why, man, the folks in town will be as glad to see you in it as ever." —"And as glad to see me ruined in it as ever," said Mr. Decastro, "but they are like to meet with no such sport, and so you may tell them, Sir Harry." "Why," said the baronet, "you don't mean to stay here and turn hermit? give us a little of your company in the winter, and then to the castle with a roaring party for the summer months." Upon which Mr. Decastro putting on a grave face—"Devil take me," continued the pleasant baronet, "if he does not look like a hermit already, but he shaves, and that's a fault! You have got some good Burgundy here, Decastro," added he, "swallowing a bumper

bumper and smacking his lips. "The baronet is very merry," said Mr. Decastro, "but I have no mind to commence savage after all; I beg to say that I have not run out of the world so much because I hated it, but because I was too fond of it to be safe in it: no, St, Clair, I do not altogether hate it, but lest I should see enough of it to make me hate it I made my escape before my good opinion of it were quite worn out; and hope you will allow me to put it as no ill proof of my good temper to have lived so long in it and not hated it." "By heaven!" said the baronet, "this is a drop of Old Crab's verjuice!" "Come, Sir Harry," said Mr. Decastro, "I will not have Old Crab, as you call him, abused, I owe a great deal to his good care of me, and if I have found one friend in the world brother Bat is the man." "A man!" quoth the baronet; "dame Nature was in a devilish cross humour when she put him on the stocks!

stocks!" And she, is, a comical toad when she takes it into her head; here's a link between the birds and the fishes in one place, and there's a link between the plants and the animals in another; there's a link between the vegetables and minerals in a third; but when goody Nature formed Old Crab there she made a fourth link between a man and a bear."

The ladies, who had some time since retired to the drawing-room, now sent for the gentlemen, but Lord Budemere and the baronet could scarce be persuaded to exchange the burgundy and claret for tea and coffee, liquors much less to their taste—they walked into the drawing-room, however, after a few more glasses, and what came to pass therein we now proceed to say.

Now it so befel that Mr. Decastro walked first into the drawing-room, and this to show his guests the way, not because they were drunk, but because they had never walked into his

draw-

drawing-room before, which was one reason why they did not know it—upon this their walk to the apartment of the ladies, Lord Budemere touched the baronet upon the shoulder and said in a whisper, " I wonder very much, St. Clair, what is become of our money ?" The baronet, who very well knew that it was much the way of money as it is of a wild bird, never to return to a man's hand after it hath once flown out of it, said, " Upon my soul I had almost forgot it, my lord, let us drop a little hint about it presently." " A hint !" said the earl, " I will make no hint of the matter ; I will ask for it, I assure you, before I leave the house : I have as little to spare as any man—money is money to me—I never was so much out of feather in my life ; or, upon my soul, St. Clair, I would have settled my Newmarket bets with you before this time : if Old Crab will but do half as much for me as he has done for Decastro, I shall soon get all my debts off

my hands." "Upon my soul, Budemere," said Sir Harry, "I am not a little surprised at his undertaking your matters after the discovery you told me of." "This comes of hoarding up old letters, Sir Harry," replied his lordship; "the matter was this—Old Crab opposed the match between me and his sister Miss Decastro; and, setting me down for a rascal, came to a quarrel with his father upon not securing her fortune to her uses; I, not a little enraged at this, wanting, as I did, a supply of ready cash at that time, made matters as bad as I could between him and his father, and spurred him into such a fury against his son, that, to make me amends, he disinherited Old Crab: most of this business was unluckily managed between the old gentleman and me by letter; and Old Crab, looking over Decastro's papers when he settled his affairs for him, in an evil hour found the whole correspondence." "This was the devil!"

vil!" said Sir Harry, "but how could you excuse yourself?" "Why," replied the earl, "I was struck dumb for a time; I took my pen, however, and wrote the best apology I could, and have not seen Old Crab since: when we meet I am afraid I shall look like the greatest fool of the two." They now walked into the drawing-room, and what was very extraordinary, they did not find the ladies silent in it.— How so? surely the wonder lies all on the other side: it lies in no such place, reader, for who could have thought they had not talked themselves presently to death having so much matter as they had to talk upon?—Now some folks have gone so far as to say that a woman does not talk after she is dead, if any please to believe it; it may be doubtful; we, however, have our reasons for not thinking it is an impossibility: but, as paper, pens and ink would fail us if we put down one-tenth of all the ladies said, we will pick a

few

few choice flowers only, of rhetoric we mean, not to get our brains turned with the metaphor, for metaphors are apt to addle men's brains, and, though it be a great truth that no lady from the beginning of ladies down to the last new petticoat, ever said a foolish thing, forasmuch as it is the prerogative of the men to keep all the silly things to themselves—except what they print—where the devil are we got?—One moment, reader, let us step back to the beginning of the sentence to see how we set out, and what it was that we were talking about — why should an author know what he is talking about? it is the proper business of the reader to find all that out; the author has nothing to do with that part of the matter, it is his business to find words, but as for meanings, reader, that is your look out; we leave that to you, and if there be no connection in what we say it is the fault of the book-binder—it is his business to stitch

all

all matters together: do we not give you words, fine words as any in the dictionary? If you have words enough for your money, reader, you have no cause for any complaint, for when a man buys a book what does he buy but words? as, when he buys a house, what does he buy but a heap of bricks? and if they all lie loose, it is all the better, he may stick them together just as he likes: folks make a fuss about architecture, and what is it after all but the sticking one brick to another? sticking words together is something like it—put down your money, sir, and we will find words enough and leave you to sort them and lay them in courses: what! do you think we take you for a fool, reader? if we find words it were an insult to suppose that you could not find sense yourself: if you have none you are no better than a fool, and had best let books alone, for, if a fool must needs buy what he don't understand, a fool and his money

are

are soon parted:—hold hard at that—he that buys your book can never be a fool: a word to the wise—if every fool in Great Britain take a copy a-piece your work will soon see its tenth edition: very good, reader, put down your penny and set the example, and Solomon in all his glory could not do a wiser thing. But we were talking about the ladies, and the pretty things that came out of their mouths—and a lady cannot spit but out falls a diamond, or a pearl; and that is the reason why pearls and diamonds are so cheap that London now-a-days is paved with precious stones—when a man pays a compliment to the ladies the greater the lie may be that he tells the better, for the greatest lie is the soonest believed!

Lord Budgmere was not a little astonished at Old Crab's readiness to look into his affairs after having found him to be the instrument of his disinheritance; Old Crab, however, was ready to do any man a good turn, friend or

enemy,

enemy, it was all one to him; notwithstanding this temper of his, however, he would often revenge an insult upon the spot; a fault, he used to say, that took him every spare moment of his life to make amends for: Lord Budemere succeeded to a noble estate and married a noble fortune too, for Miss Decastro, as hath been said, came into his house with her sister Peggy's fortune as well as her own; for poor Peggy was disinherited too—Old Decastro laid about him when he was in his tantrums—Lord Budemere had plenty both of land and money, and some very fine houses, but prodigality was the moth that fretted the garment—Not to tell Mr. Decastro's story over again, however, in another man's name, suffice it to say that Old Crab found his lordship's matters in a much worse condition than his brother John's matters; but more of this in another place. We will now look into Mr. Decastro's drawing-room, where the gentlemen upon their entré found the ladies talking

with all their might. Lady St. Clair, who was stung with more scorpions than one, seemed to be in a state of much inflammation; she was making some pretty free remarks upon Mrs. Decastro's masquerade, as she called it, and went so far as to say, though not in so many words, that she was not at all times in the humour to be made a fool of; she would not have it thought, she said, that she could not take a jest as well as another, but thought at the same time that people's feelings were not to be trifled with in such a manner. Colonel Barret's story, seconded and confirmed as it was by Mrs. Decastro's letter to Lady Budemere, the insinuations of which she left to the writer's conscience, if they might very well deceive people single-handed, what could be expected from their forces united but an unqualified belief that every thing in the idle butter-shop were true? She, for her part, she said, was not very easily imposed upon, but

she as much believed that all she saw in it were true, when she threw her purse into Mrs. Decastro's ragged apron, as she believed that she was a breathing creature. Mrs. Perrimont, who could talk as well as Lady St. Clair, wound up her argument with saying, that the result of this pretty piece of mockery amounted to making a jest of a friend who came to do a kind thing: she loved a jest as well as any body, but never could give countenance to a joke that sacrificed the feelings of one's friends. Lord Budemere, whose money ran a good deal in his head, put in a few words by main force at this place; for he had never come in but by downright strength of voice: begging pardon for interrupting the ladies, with much politeness, he said that the whole party felt extreme sorrow at seeing Mr. and Mrs. Decastro, whom they used to see moving in the first circles in the world, now degraded into shopkeepers, and in this the

large

large contributions which they made might very well bear them out; his pity, he added, had never picked his pocket to such an amount before. In this they all agreed, except the kind countess, (who retired, as it may be remembered, in tears and sorrow to her carriage,) and looked as if they could be very glad to see their charity-money coming back again—into which language Mrs. Decastro construed their eager looks in a moment, and, unlocking a little gold box which stood amongst a profusion of other ornaments upon a work-table, she first took out the earl's thirty pound note, and, returning it to his lordship, said, "As far as you pitied the poor pork and butter-woman I am obliged to you, and you, Sir Harry," returning his money;—"and you, madam," returning Lady St. Clair's; "and you, Sir Harry, and you, Mrs. Perrimont," returning theirs with an elegant curtsey to each as she restored them their property;—

then turning to the countess and kindly shaking hands with her, she added, "but you, my dear sister, gave me nothing but your tears, a more precious gift by far than any sum of money;—there is more true charity in one kind drop that falls in private for the sorrows and sufferings of others, than in a thousand guineas proudly ushered into the notice of the world in all the pomp and parade of public contribution." In a few days Lord Budemere and his party left the castle.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar.